

field. Since most of the material exhibited has come from official sources, one may well ask why the Government itself could not have arranged such an exhibition.

Clay Minerals Group of the Mineralogical Society

THE Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland has recently approved the formation of a Clay Minerals Group. The study of these minerals not only constitutes a separate branch of mineralogy, but also is of interest to scientific workers in a large variety of departments of pure and applied research. It was felt by the organisers that a Group of this sort would serve an important function in bringing together these workers and allowing them to exchange ideas based on their common interest in clay minerals. For this purpose provision was made for the holding of regular meetings at which accounts could be given of research in progress, and informal discussions could take place. The first meeting of the Group was held on January 24, and invitations to attend it were sent not only to the nucleus of interested persons in the Mineralogical Society itself, but also to a large number of workers in industrial, pure and applied research likely to be interested. The response was most gratifying, and the meeting was held in the rooms of the Geological Society, Burlington House, and was attended by about eighty people. An introductory address was given by Prof. J. D. Bernal.

The following speakers gave accounts of their work: Dr. Mackenzie and Mr. Walker (Macaulay Institute for Soil Research, Aberdeen); Prof. C. H. Edelman (Landbouwhoogeschool, Wageningen); Dr. J. White (University of Sheffield); Mr. K. E. Clare (Road Research Laboratory, Harmondsworth); Prof. Nils Hast (Stockholms Högskola); Dr. Barbara Emödi (Fullers Earth Union, Ltd., Redhill); Drs. A. L. Roberts and G. W. Brindley (University of Leeds); Mlle. Caillère (Museum d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris); S. Hénin (Centre de Recherches Agronomiques, Versailles); Dr. R. K. Schofield (Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden); J. Méring and Mlle. Longuet (Laboratoire Central des Services Chimiques, Paris). In addition, accounts were given of the work in progress at the University of Granada (Spain), and of the work of the Comité Belge pour l'Étude des Argiles. A letter of greeting was received from the latter organisation; also a telegram from Academicians Belyankin and Polynov and other workers at the Dokuchaev Soil Institute, Moscow, which was read at the meeting.

The scientific meetings were followed by a business meeting of the Group members and foreign visitors, at which the functions of the Group, and its relations with similar organisations abroad, were considered. Dr. G. W. Brindley (University of Leeds) was elected president of the Group, and Dr. D. M. C. MacEwan, Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden, Herts, was elected secretary. Promises of support were given by scientific workers from Portugal, Spain and Sweden. M. Hénin gave a promise of collaboration on behalf of the analogous French group, which has recently been constituted (this group differs from the British group, however, in having been set up under Government auspices). Work in Holland in this field was also described. The number of visitors from abroad who were able to attend this one-day meeting was particularly gratifying, and their contributions were very valuable. A reception in honour of the foreign visitors was provided in the

evening by the British Council, and they were entertained the following day at Rothamsted Experimental Station.

Halifax House, Oxford

ON January 21, the Chancellor of the University of Oxford, Lord Halifax, formally opened the new Graduate Centre, named in his honour Halifax House, which has successfully been running as a club for senior members of the University since August last. This Graduate Centre was formerly an Anglican convent, standing in two acres of land in Woodstock Road, just north of the Radcliffe Infirmary, and not more than five minutes walk from the main block of science laboratories in the Parks. It is proving a good and timely purchase by the University. The University Grants Committee has helped in financing it. The interior has been skillfully adapted for club use by Mr. J. H. Worthington. Its main purpose is to serve as a club for senior members of the University, especially for those who have, as yet, no college affiliation, for graduates from overseas, for professors from abroad on their sabbatical leaves, for Civil servants from the British Empire back in Oxford for refresher courses and for Colonial and forestry probationers and their like. Halifax House, it is hoped, is but the beginning of a series of clubs in Oxford catering for the needs of senior members which cannot be met by the colleges. It provides, at present, eighteen bed-sitting-rooms for resident members, and two large common rooms and a large garden for non-residents. All meals but breakfast may be had there, and the subscription is only £1 a year.

For several years now the University has had on its conscience the social needs of many of its teachers who tend, at least at first, to be neglected by the colleges. Graduates of other universities appointed to University as opposed to College posts below a professorship, especially in medicine, some sciences and modern languages, may easily find themselves neglected by the colleges and so 'out of things' socially. A large and important modern 'university' now exists in Oxford side by side with the older university with its colleges and great social amenities, and the latter have not done all they could to hold out a friendly, social hand to the former. In the School of Engineering, for example, several of the demonstrators and lecturers have had to wait years before a college noticed their social existence. In the thirty years since the chair was founded, only one teacher below the rank of professor has been made fellow of a college. Halifax House, and similar centres for senior members in Oxford, are bound to play a useful part in bringing together graduates and teachers of many kinds in a social and friendly way who, hitherto, have met little outside working hours.

Production of Oil from Coal in Germany

DR. A. PARKER, director of fuel research, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, speaking on "Oil from Coal in Germany" at the Fuel Luncheon Club on January 23, stated that Germany developed before the War two synthetic processes, hydrogenation and the Fischer-Tropsch process for the production of petroleum from coal, and many large plants were constructed. At the time of maximum production during the early months of 1944, these two processes together provided oil at a rate of nearly four million tons a year. As a by-product from the