

of local death-rates. The text for 1952 consists of the usual commentary on population movements in that year. There were no violent changes to report: fertility remained at a stable level, and the concentration of childbearing in the early years of marriage continued. The report brings out the remarkable increase in the married population; in the age-groups 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29 the proportion of women who were married exceeded that in 1938 by 83, 49 and 21 per cent, respectively. An interesting report on marriages by method of solemnization shows that 13.6 per cent of the 1952 religious marriages were celebrated according to Roman Catholic rites against 9.1 per cent in 1934, the last year for which figures were collected. Civil marriages as a proportion of all marriages increased from 28.4 per cent to 30.6 per cent in the same period. The mortality section of the text includes a detailed analysis of cancer mortality.

Vitamins: Memorial Essays to Sir Edward Mellanby

THE January issue of the *British Medical Bulletin* (12, No. 1; from the British Council Medical Department, 65 Davies Street, London, W.1; 15s.) is a memorial number to Sir Edward Mellanby, the late secretary of the Medical Research Council. As the article on him and his work by Sir Charles Harington, director of the National Institute for Medical Research, so clearly shows, his death deprived British medicine of one of its most influential figures. The number consists of a series of essays on the vitamins, written by experts, which were originally planned by a committee with Sir Edward as chairman, and he himself intended to contribute to it. Now it appears as a memorial to him—a fitting memorial, for it was in the field of vitamins that Sir Edward did such notable work. It is fitting, too, that one article describes the work of the Accessory Food Factors Committee and Mellanby's influence on the work of this Committee. It is impossible to select, from a list of sixteen articles, all written by leading authorities, any that excel the others. The whole issue is valuable; and those interested in any way in vitamins will find that the summaries given of recent work, and the bibliographies that accompany each article, are sources of information which will add to their understanding of a volume of work that is now so extensive that few, if any, can follow all its many aspects and applications. An excellent photograph of Sir Edward, taken in Lucknow, accompanies the number.

Recording of Animal Sounds: Conference in Pennsylvania

THE commercial development of tape recorders during recent years has fostered a great deal of scientific research in the recording of sounds made by animals. Unfortunately, the comparison of results by different workers is very difficult: the printed word in a journal is obviously inadequate; the physical analysis of sounds into 'pictures' has little meaning to biologists, and it is not practicable to convert the picture back to the original sounds for retesting; and even the exchange of actual tapes between workers may be useless if the associated machines are of different types. To make a start on these problems a conference will be held during April 16-19 in the United States at the Pennsylvania State University, at which it is hoped to reach agreement on acceptable procedures for recording animal sounds and start a repository of tapes. The

first day of the conference will be devoted to reports of research on animal behaviour in which sound-recording techniques have been used, given by the following: Prof. Donald Griffin (Harvard University), Dr. R.-G. Busnel (Laboratoire de Physiologie Acoustique, France), Prof. F. Möhres (University of Tübingen) and Prof. R. J. Pumphrey (University of Liverpool). The remaining days will be devoted to informal discussions on recording techniques and standards. Further information on the conference can be obtained from Prof. H. Frings, Department of Zoology, University Park, Pennsylvania.

University of London: Appointments

DR. D. R. COX, visiting research professor in the University of North Carolina, has been appointed to the University readership in statistics tenable at Birkbeck College.

The title of reader in the University of London, in the subjects indicated, has been conferred on the following in respect of the posts that they already hold: Dr. E. J. Harris (biophysics), University College; Dr. Leonard Saunders (pharmaceutical chemistry), School of Pharmacy; Dr. John Sutton (geology), Imperial College of Science and Technology.

Royal Astronomical Society: Officers

THE following have been elected officers for 1956 of the Royal Astronomical Society: *President*, Sir Harold Jeffreys, Plumian professor of astronomy in the University of Cambridge; *Vice-Presidents*, Dr. A. Hunter, Dr. J. Jackson, Prof. A. C. B. Lovell, Dr. R. A. Lyttleton (*Geophysical Secretary*); *Treasurer*, Prof. L. M. Milne-Thomson; *Secretaries*, Prof. C. W. Allen, Prof. H. Bondi; *Foreign Secretary*, Sir Harold Spencer Jones.

Announcements

DR. CLAUDE E. SHANNON, research mathematician at the Bell Telephone Laboratories, Inc., has been appointed visiting professor of electrical communications at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He will be associated with the Institute's Research Laboratory of Electronics, and will lecture on advanced information theory, based on his recent research at the Bell Laboratories. Dr. Shannon's work in mathematical theory has led to the development of maze-solving machines, and more recently he has been studying problems in probability, such as the design of reliable machines consisting of unreliable components.

THE Ergonomics Research Society is arranging a symposium on "Human Factors in Road Transport", to be held in the University of Bristol during April 16-19. The first session will be a general one, though most of the papers will deal with some aspect of visibility, and the second and third sessions will be devoted to driver behaviour and physiological aspects, respectively. The fee for the symposium is 5s. for members of the Society and 35s. for non-members. Accommodation can be booked at the Manor Hall, one of the University halls of residence. Further information can be obtained from H. Murrell, The Miners' Arms, Priddy, Wells, Somerset.

ERRATUM. The article on "Structure of Semi- and Non-crystalline Materials" in *Nature* of January 21 contains a reference to a paper by Dr. E. J. W. Whittaker (p. 122, col. 2, line 5 from bottom); in this reference, for "chrysolite" read "chrysotile".