

### Agricultural Research Council: Weed Research Organization

THE Agricultural Research Council is setting up a new Weed Research Organization which will assume some of the present functions of the Council's Unit of Experimental Agronomy at the University of Oxford. The new Organization has been created for the purpose of extending the applied research which lies between the basic scientific investigations being carried out at the Unit and the introduction of new methods of weed control in agriculture and horticulture. To provide the facilities required to enable the Organization to carry out this work, the Council has acquired a farm near Oxford, where a laboratory and other buildings are to be provided. The director of the new Organization will be Dr. E. K. Woodford, who is at present assistant director, under Prof. G. E. Blackman, of the Council's Unit of Experimental Agronomy. The Organization will maintain close liaison with the Unit, which will continue its main purpose of fundamental research concerning the factors which determine the selective action of compounds toxic to plants.

### Nuffield Foundation: Unit for the History of Scientific Ideas

THE Nuffield Foundation has formed a Unit for the History of Scientific Ideas which will produce educational films and books under the direction of Prof. Stephen Toulmin, formerly professor of philosophy in the University of Leeds. A sum of £60,000 has been allocated for the Unit. The Foundation believes that a better public understanding of science would be assisted if discussion of the history of scientific ideas had a larger part in the educational curriculum and in intellectual life generally. A place is being made for the subject at some schools and universities; but there is not enough educational material available at levels suitable for sixth forms and undergraduates. The first aim of the Unit will be to produce a basic collection of teaching films and text-books for use in sixth forms and introductory university courses in the history and philosophy of science.

Before the Unit was conceived, the Nuffield Foundation supported the production by Prof. Toulmin and Miss Goodfield of a colour film "Earth and Sky", which has been well received by educationists. The first two films to be made by the Unit are likely to be on the theory of matter and evolution, and the Hutchinson Group are to publish a series of books under the general title "The Ancestry of Science" covering the same ground as the films. A series of monographs at a more advanced level is also to be published, and some books with colour illustrations for secondary modern schools are also envisaged.

### The Textile Institute

IN his presidential address to the Textile Institute at its fiftieth annual general meeting at Leicester on April 22, the Earl of Derby stressed the value of the Institute to the textile industry. This was shown by the way in which the Institute's activities had flourished and its membership been maintained in a period of reorganization when many mills had closed, and it was encouraging to note the interest employers' organizations were now showing in technological education. Management, he said, must be prepared to spend both time and money in making certain that the right number of young men of the

proper outlook are encouraged to enter the industry, and trained when in it, or that they would be ready to guide the industry in a future when other countries have developed technical resources equal to those of Britain. This could not be achieved cheaply: the industry must be prepared to invest in men as well as in machinery and it was a matter of vital concern to the industry that a professional man should keep his knowledge up to date and contribute to the development of his technology by playing his full part as a member of the Textile Institute. Lord Derby referred particularly to the technological work undertaken by the Institute, for example, in the preparation of standard methods of test for publication by the British Standards Institution, in the Institute's own publications such as "Terms and Definitions", its *Transactions* and its *Abstracts*. Appealing for more generous support from the industry, he suggested that the income of the Institute could usefully be doubled.

### The Wandering British Scientist

IN a written answer to a question in the House of Commons on March 28 as to what steps were being taken to stop the gradual loss of scientific personnel from the United Kingdom to the United States, particularly in view of the number of scientists who had left the Jodrell Bank radiotelescope project, the Minister of Education, as representing the Minister for Science, said that the general problem of emigration of scientific personnel had been under consideration for some years by the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy. Since 1958 steps taken by the Civil Service Commission and the Atomic Energy Authority to recruit British scientists in America had met with some success.

### Payment of Scientific Civil Services

*State Service* of April 1960 contains the annual report for 1959 of the Institution of Civil Servants, issued in readiness for the annual meeting of the Institution at Eastbourne during May 23-25. The year was marked by a 3.5 per cent pay supplement on salaries up to £2,000, the Coleraine Committee's recommendations for the higher Civil Service and their acceptance by the Government, and a 10 per cent increase in night subsistence allowance with the commencement of a review of all subsistence arrangements. The report regrets the apparent downward trend of the status of professional scientific and technical officers in the Atomic Energy Authority, also some steps which might indicate an intention to minimize the role of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research in scientific research. The Government's attitude to salaries in general is criticized, as is the continued refusal to make any move towards counting unestablished service in full for superannuation purposes. The membership of the Institution on December 31, 1959, is given as 51,632, and the issue notes that the present general secretary will be retiring after the 1961 Conference. Reference is also made to the possibility that technical Civil Servants may take a day off simultaneously in view of their growing impatience at handling pay requests.

### Apprenticeship Training in Britain

IN reply to a question in the House of Commons on April 11, the Minister of Labour, Mr. E. Heath, said he is proposing to set up a small number of classes in Government training centres to provide first-year