

and scorpions and even *Limulus* seem to contribute to this importance.

In a work on the Arachnida and for that matter, on any Arthropod class it is impossible to avoid extensive classification and the monotony of this has been successfully dispelled by the "excursus" which the author appends to every chapter. Many of these are full of interest to the layman, and all to the naturalist. In one, on "The Arachnida as formidable animals" (page 113), the author discusses the psychology of fear and accounts for the terror that spiders and scorpions infuse in our minds as due to the

rapid movements that these animals exhibit. While granting that rapidity of movement is one of the contributory causes of fear, it should be said that it is only one of the causes. Nor is it a reason in all cases of fear. A swiftly darting bird does not infuse terror and after all, a dead scorpion induces fear just as much as a moving, very much alive one. Several other topics of general interest are dealt with in these little essays and the book closes with a full bibliography and a complete index.

B. R. S.

### Functions and Organisation of the India Meteorological Department.\*

IN an interesting pamphlet entitled "Functions and Organisation of the India Meteorological Department, 1935," the Meteorological Office, Poona, has summarised the various functions of the Department and has described briefly the organisation that exists at present for carrying on these duties. The list is comprehensive and contains all the important phases of the work usually dealt with by similar institutions in other progressive countries. Increasing attention has, of late, been given to the problems of upper air, chiefly owing to their importance in connection with aviation; but it is admitted that the meteorological service for this purpose still falls short of the minimum recommended by the International Convention.

Besides meteorology, the activities of the Department include some branches of allied sciences such as seismology and terrestrial magnetism. Thus geophysical researches form part of the routine duties at the Colaba and Alibag Observatories while the Observatory at Kodaikanal, South India, specialises in the study of solar physics and has undertaken some work in co-operation with the International Astronomical Union. Mention is made also of the seismographs

that have been maintained at a few stations for the systematic recording of earthquakes.

It is interesting to note that a section for agricultural meteorology has been recently established at the headquarters of the Department, at the Instance of the Imperial Council of Agricultural research. Besides statistical investigations, the section makes a special study of microclimatology and generally carries on researches on problems affecting the welfare of the crops. In view of the supreme importance of this branch of the subject to an agricultural country like India the results of these investigations will ultimately prove to be of considerable practical value. A brief outline is also given of some features of the developments that are contemplated as soon as financial conditions permit; and the note concludes with four appendices giving extracts relating to meteorology from the proceedings of International Conventions and the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India.

\* Functions and Organisation of the India Meteorological Department, 1935. Meteorological Office, Poona.

### The Indore Meeting of the Science Congress.

ARRANGEMENTS are now actively in hand for the forthcoming meeting of the Indian Science Congress Association in Indore. As usual, the date of the meeting is from the 2nd to the 8th of January, 1935, thus enabling members to avail themselves of the Christmas concession on the railways. In addition, the railway authorities have been approached with regard to granting further concessions, but their decision in the matter will not be known until after the Railway Association has met at Simla in October.

The meeting is being held under the patronage of H. H. Maharajadhiraj Raj Rajeshwar Sawai Shree Yeshwant Rao Holkar Bahadur, Maharaja of Indore. In accordance with the alteration which was made last year in regard to the President's term of office, Dr. J. H. Hutton will remain

President of the Association until he hands over his office at the Inaugural Meeting to the President-Elect, who is Rai Sir Upendranath Brahmachari, Bahadur, Kt., M.A., M.D., Ph.D., F.S.M.F., F.A.S.B.

At the last meeting of the Congress, held in Calcutta, two alterations were made in the list of Sections. The name of the Geology Section was changed to "Geology and Geography," thus indicating that papers on geography would be accepted; while a new section for Physiology was added, thus bringing the number of Sections upto 10.

The names and addresses of the Sectional Presidents are as follows:—

1. *Mathematics and Physics*.—Dr. T. Royds, D.Sc., Director, Kodaikanal Observatory, Kodaikanal, S, India.