

A CORRESPONDENT writes: "Dr. Hans Becker, geologist for Socony-Vacuum Oil Company in Caracas, Venezuela, died in July, while engaged in active field work. Dr. Becker was formerly dozent in the University of Leipzig and professor at the National Central

University in Nanking. His many publications dealt chiefly with the regional aspects of stratigraphic and structural geology, to which field he made important contributions. His early death, at a time when much of his work was incomplete, is greatly to be regretted."

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE OF THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

THE Hebrew University of Jerusalem will graduate this year the first class of agronomists to be trained in Palestine. As recently as five years ago it was necessary for students who wanted professional training in scientific agriculture either to go abroad or to change their plans. The Hebrew University, in cooperation with the Agricultural Research Station of the Jewish Agency, has provided them with a School of Agriculture of university rank.

Though inaugurated in 1940, the School of Agriculture was formally opened late in 1942, when the senior class was ready for the professional courses in agricultural science, which are given in the new building of the School of Rehovoth. The head both of the School of Agriculture and of the Agricultural Research Station of the Jewish Agency is Professor I. Elazari Volcani. Professor Volcani is known for his pioneer research and experimentation in Palestine and for his long experience in practical farm management.

The five-year curriculum of the school, which is confined for the present to mixed farming as the most wide-spread form of agriculture in Palestine, is divided into three parts: two years' study of physics, chemistry, general soil science, geology, botany, zoology, bacteriology and meteorology at the university. These courses are followed by one year's practical work on the land. The fourth and fifth years are spent in Rehovoth, where the courses include practical as well as theoretical instruction in farm management, special soil science, field and garden crops, horticulture, citriculture, agricultural entomology, plant pathology and animal husbandry.

The two years' course in natural sciences at the university is also directly bound up—and not only theoretically—with the future professional work of the students. Their teachers are men and women who have long applied their researches to the practical problems of agriculture in Palestine and helped the settlers out of many a difficulty with the results of their experimentation.

The students learn how to apply science to agricultural problems in different countries in accordance with the local conditions peculiar to each. An essen-

tial fact that applies to these students is that they are at home in Palestine and mean to devote themselves to agriculture there. In view of the important services that they will soon be able to render on the vital home front, all have been excused from the duty of enlistment in the armed forces by the Jewish recruiting committees.

SUGGESTED BRITISH SCHOOL OF AERONAUTICAL SCIENCE

REPLYING to a question raised in the House of Commons on December 1, we learn from *Nature* that the Minister of Aircraft Production, Sir Stafford Cripps, announced that the Aeronautical Research Committee had recommended the creation of a new school of aeronautical science, coordinated with existing training facilities, to bridge what it considers to be a gap in the present system. This report is approved in principle by the government, and an interdepartmental committee has been appointed to prepare detailed proposals for its establishment. The committee is under the chairmanship of Sir Roy Fedden, sometime designer and chief engineer of the engine section of the Bristol Aeroplane Company. This company was one of the first in the aeronautical world to initiate an apprentice training school in its works under Sir Roy's guidance, and in addition he has just returned from a tour of the United States, where he has studied the systems of aeronautical instruction in use there.

Although the terms of the report were not announced, it is said to follow the scheme described by Sir Bennett Melvill Jones, the chairman of the Aeronautical Research Committee, in his remarks at a recent discussion on aeronautical education before the Royal Aeronautical Society. The school will be postgraduate and will be additional to the facilities of a similar standard at present available at universities. It will deal with advanced study and experimental work of a technical nature, leaving the more scientific and research aspects to the university schools. It is also hoped to include certain aspects of flying, incidental to the teaching. It is hoped that such training will appeal to the university graduate who desires to take up the more applied side of the profession, the