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 essential 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

works apprentice who has attained a sufficiently high standard in theoretical study, and possibly senior men from the industry and the forces who desire refresher courses.

THE CHICAGO NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

THE Chicago Natural History Museum has been officially known by that name only for the past month, since the granting of an amended charter by the Secretary of State at Springfield changed the name of what was formerly Field Museum of Natural History. A statement made by Orr Goodson, acting director, reads in part:

The museum's activities during 1943 continued to be tied in with the war effort. The institution's photographic collections and informational sources were placed at the disposal of the army, navy and other government agencies, and many members of the staff served as consultants on geographic and scientific subjects at the request of government bureaus. Some members of the staff contributed the information for manuals used by soldiers and sailors in far-off lands. For the public, special exhibits pertaining to some of the more important theaters of the war were arranged, and a special series of lectures, "Backgrounds of the War," was presented. To the degree that conditions permitted, all normal museum activities were continued. Attendance was nearly normal, with more than one million visitors received.

The opening of a new hall called "Indian America," devoted to archeology of the New World, was a major event of 1943. This hall represents a radically improved technique in anthropological exhibition methods, characterized by sparsity of labels and brevity of those which are used, the use of especially adapted fluorescent lighting, a liberal use of gay colors, and the inauguration of completely new ideas of exhibition, in which a graphic bird's-eye view of ancient cultures is substituted for large collections of artifacts. Despite shortages of personnel and of materials for construction, many other important new exhibits were installed in all departments of the museum—anthropology, botany, geology and zoology.

The following changes have occurred in the regular staff of the museum: Clifford C. Gregg, director, on leave for service with the army, has been promoted from the rank of lieutenant-colonel to colonel. Dr. C. Martin Wilbur, curator of Chinese archeology and ethnology, has been granted leave of absence to join the staff of the Office of Strategic Services, Washington, D. C. Dr. Julian A. Steyermark, assistant curator of the herbarium, and Llewelyn Williams, curator of economic botany, have been granted leave of absence to engage in foreign missions for the Board of Economic Warfare of the United States Government.

George A. Quimby was confirmed in his appointment as curator of North American archeology; Gustav Oscar Dalstrom was appointed artist in the department of anthropology; Dr. Alfred E. Emerson, Dr. Charles H. Seevers and Alex K. Wyatt were appointed research associates in entomology; Mrs. Roberta Cramer and Miss Emma Neve were appointed lecturers. After a year in service in Africa with the American Field Service, Bert E. Grove, wounded, was returned home, and rejoined the staff as lecturer. Alfred C. Weed, curator of fishes for twenty-two years, retired.

The honor roll of museum employees and trustees now engaged in war services numbers thirty-nine men and women.

THE AMERICAN STANDARDS ASSOCIATION

THE American Standards Association, a federation of national groups dealing with standardization, through which government, industry, labor and the consumer work together to develop mutually satisfactory national standards and which acts as the authoritative channel for international cooperation in standardization work, has announced the publication of a new list of standards. There are more than 600 standards listed, of which 64 have been approved or revised since the last price list was printed in April. The standards cover specifications for materials, methods of tests, dimensions, definitions of technical terms, procedures, etc.

One important phase of the work built up during the twenty-five years that the association has been in existence is in the field of safety engineering. The new list includes ninety-five safety standards. Standards are constantly revised to keep up with advances in industrial methods.

Since the war, the association has been working very closely with government agencies and with the Armed Services to provide specifications for certain of the materials necessary to the war effort. Because these standards are developed through an accelerated procedure, they are designated as American War Standards. These are listed separately, and to date there are forty already completed and many more under development. These war standards have been produced in the field of safety work, machine tools, quality control, photography and radio, just to mention a few. Every government order is based on specifications: standards are used to accelerate production, conserve materials, maintain a balance between quality and price control, simplify inspection, contracting and subcontracting. All are designed to relieve shortages of time, material and man-power.

In each case, the standards approved represent general agreement on the part of maker, seller and user groups as to the best current industrial practice. More than six hundred organizations are taking part in this work.

The complete list of American standards should serve as valuable reference material to engineers, manufacturers, purchasing agents, etc. It will be