SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

VISITATION DAY AT THE GREENWICH OBSERVATORY

THE Board of Visitors of the Greenwich Observatory met on June 3 to receive the report of Dr. Spencer Jones, Astronomer Royal, on the work of the observatory for the year ending April 30.

Attention is called by the London *Times* to the circumstance that in the printed list of visitors the names of professors and others who occupy the position *ex-officio* remain as heretofore, but to the names of those nominated by the Royal Society and the Royal Astronomical Society, six in each case, a date is affixed to show that each is nominated for a period and indicating when that period expires. In this year's list Sir James Jeans and J. H. Reynolds give place to Dr. C. G. Darwin and Dr. R. Stoneley. The name of the late Sir Frank Dyson was printed in the list, and with that exception all the members were present. The invited company numbered nearly four hundred.

The Astronomer Royal, according to the report, is much concerned about the present suitability of Greenwich for certain branches of work, and for that of Abinger in Surrey, to which the magnetic registration of the elements of the earth's magnetic field was transferred in 1924. The electrification of further sections of the Southern Railway has made the removal of the magnetic observations a necessity. Experiments have been made at Selsey which show that the site should be not less than eight miles from any electrified railway, which, if the magnetic observatory is to remain in the south of England, limits the choice to Devon. As to the astronomy, the building developments southward of the observatory from which direction the prevailing winds come and the growth of industries near the river, together with modern developments of street lighting and the extensive use of neon signs, all have their adverse effect on long-exposure photography and in other ways. A table is given of the comparison of sunshine records at Kew and Greenwich which is striking. Twenty-five years ago the average yearly total at Greenwich was 60 hours in excess of Kew's; this has gradually diminished, and now the Greenwich total is less by 160 hours, this being ascribed to loss of register at Greenwich when the sun is low caused by atmospheric impurities.

Dr. Jones closes his report with the remark: "Proposals for the removal of the whole of the astronomical work from Greenwich and of the magnetic work from Abinger to new and more favorable sites are accordingly under consideration."

SURVEY OF THE CENTRAL AND SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN

PLANS for an extensive scientific survey of the Central and South Pacific Ocean, with a view to solving some of its fundamental problems, have been announced by Dr. Gilbert Grosvenor, president of the National Geographic Society.

Arrangements for the expedition, which will be made on a Coast Guard Cutter, have been reached in consultation with President Roosevelt, Secretary Hull and Under-Secretary Welles, Secretary Morgenthau and Rear Admiral Russell R. Waesche, commandant of the Coast Guard, who are particularly interested in the contributions to navigation, both by water and air, that will be made by the magnetic studies which are a part of the work of the expedition. Concurrently with the carrying on of scientific work, the Coast Guard will make a survey of the present and future needs for navigational aids and radio facilities to assist marine and air commerce.

Professor Wilbur A. Nelson, chairman of the department of geology of the University of Virginia, will be the leader of the expedition. The party will include geophysicists, a geographer, a cartographer and a photographer, provided by the National Geographic Society; specialists on gravity from the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey; on magnetism from the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and in marine biology from the Smithsonian Institution.

The National Broadcasting Company will send radio engineers to investigate radio phenomena, and will arrange a number of broadcasts by members of the scientific party from remote islands.

The cutter which will transport the expedition will be one of the newest and largest steel ships of the Coast Guard with a length of 327 feet and a displacement of 2,000 tons. It is fitted with the latest type of sonic depth-finders with which ocean depths are quickly ascertained by measuring the split-second time during which a sound travels to the ocean bottom and is echoed back. It carries a two-seater scout observation seaplane which will be used in making aerial photographs and maps of islands.

An important aspect of the work will be the attempt to solve by geophysical methods some of the fundamental geological problems of the Pacific. Stations on the various islands for gravity and magnetic determinations will be set up. At the same time the geology and structure of the islands will be studied. Although a number of magnetic determinations were made in the area a decade and more ago, no gravity work has been carried on there, and there has been no opportunity to relate magnetic, gravity and geologic observations.

The expedition will sail from San Francisco and will make one of its early stops at Canton Island, potential way-station for an air service between the