Archeology in Southeast Asia

Archeologists working in a cave at Niah in the jungle of Sarawak, Borneo, have reached a layer of habitation dating back 10,000 years. A member of the research expedition, M. F. Tweedie, curator of Singapore's Raffles Museum, says that the finds of stone tools, pottery, matting, sea shells, and even the "leftovers" of a caveman's dinner present new evidence of the migrations of prehistoric people to what now are the multitude of islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

The leader of the expedition, Tom Harrisson, curator of the Sarawak Museum in the British Crown Colony on the west coast of Borneo, has suggested that the cave should be turned into a museum for archeologists, geologists, and students of Southeast Asia. He believes the Niah Cave could turn out to be a major contribution to the understanding of the evolution of man in Asia and the islands.

Science on TV

On or about 29 Dec. of this year CBS Television will present, with the cooperation of the AAAS, a 1-hour program on the scientific advances that have taken place during 1957. In 1956 a similar program was prepared as part of a series of three telecasts that included a summary of the year's news events and a round-table report on world conditions.

The aim of the new broadcast that is being planned is to present a balanced picture of important achievements in all fields of science, basic and applied, during 1957. Preliminary work in the gathering of story material has begun. The producers of the show would like to be informed about scientific advances that could appropriately be included, especially developments that are recorded on motion picture film. Suggestions should be sent either to Raymond L. Taylor, AAAS, or to Michael Sklar, CBS Television, 485 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y.

Patent Examiners

The New York Patent Law Association reports that the Patent Office is still desperately in need of engineers and scientists to serve as patent examiners. The association reports that, while delays in the processing of patent applications in the Patent Office have been somewhat reduced during the past year, it still takes about 10 months before a new patent application is first examined, and an average of 3½ years before a patent is issued.

These delays create uncertainty about the patent status of new products and processes and tend to slow down or defer their adoption by industry and their introduction to the public. This situation should be of general concern because it can handicap the larger corporation and can be critical for the individual inventor and the small businessman whose operations revolve around patented products and processes.

Men and women holding college degrees in engineering or applied science, or a degree with a major in chemistry or physics, or with certain combined credits in these fields are eligible for appointment as patent examiners, without examination, upon application to the Commissioner of Patents in Washington, D.C.

Under the revised salary schedule the minimum starting salary is $4480 per year. Promotion to $5335 per year may be expected after 3 months' service, based solely on ability and work performance. With as little as 6 months of professional experience in engineering, chemistry, physics, or patent law, the starting salary is $5335 per year, with an expected increase to $6250 9 months later. It is usual for an examiner to be earning $8215 annually within 5 years after graduation from college, with additional opportunities for promotion up to $13,760.

The Patent Office during each of the past few years has been adding an increasing number of women to its staff of examiners, and the Patent Association stresses the fact that the Patent Office offers an unusually satisfying career for women with engineering or scientific backgrounds who wish to make full use of their training.

Euler Anniversary

Last month many of Europe's leading scientists converged upon Basel, Switzerland, to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Leonhard Euler, founder of the modern study of analytical mathematics. In the University of Basel's auditorium, Swiss scientist Andreas Speiser reviewed Euler's contributions. In addition to his work in pure analytical mathematics, Euler introduced modern abbreviations for trigonometric functions, put on paper the first complete treatises on calculus, and investigated the then obscure area of beta and gamma functions.

Although mathematics was the field closest to his heart, Euler, like his contemporary Goethe, explored a broad range of human knowledge. His studies included astronomy, hydrodynamics, optics, and music.

Despite total blindness during his last years, and undiscouraged by a fire that destroyed his home and many valuable papers, he continued to send communications to both the Prussian academy and the academy in St. Petersburg, where he had gone to live early in his life at the invitation of Catherine I. When he died in 1783, some 200 finished papers were found among his belongings.

N.Y. Central Laboratory

A $1-million research center that is equipped for work in atomic energy has been formally opened by the New York Central Railroad. This is probably the largest laboratory of its type for any railroad. The laboratory's findings should lead to more efficient operation of equipment.

ICA-Michigan Atomic Advisory Group

A consulting group designed to advise this country's International Cooperation Administration on ways to promote the peaceful uses of atomic energy throughout the world has been established at the University of Michigan. The project, operating under a 2-year contract with ICA, is being administered by the university's Memorial Phoenix Project of atomic research.

William Kerr, associate professor of electrical engineering, has been named supervisor of the group, which will be made up of six faculty members employed part-time on the contract. Later, special consultants from both on and off the campus will be called upon to assist in their particular fields.

Kerr has recently returned from Thailand, where he carried out the group's first overseas assignment: to help that government prepare a proposal for a training and research program in the atomic energy field. This proposal will be submitted to the U.S. State Department for support under the "Atoms for Peace" plan.

The following assignments will be carried out at the request of ICA's Office of Industrial Resources: (i) study the technical resources of the nations with which ICA is cooperating and recommend types of atomic energy programs technically and economically feasible for them; (ii) evaluate proposals from these nations for technical assistance and requests for equipment involving training and research; (iii) prepare estimates on the cost of facilities for the establishment of radioisotope research and training laboratories; (iv) survey the possibilities of atomic power development in the cooperating nations; (v) help ICA missions abroad disseminate information on the practical uses of radioisotopes and radiation in industry,