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Brief Guide to GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

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GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

A workman carrying a bag of tools stopped as he was passing one of the Stationery Office bookshops not long ago and was heard to say, as he looked through the window: "These chaps seem to have got something on everything."

He was not far wrong. The number and range of official publications in recent years have increased enormously, and it is the object of this little Guide to give some idea of the vast literature labelled as "Government Publications." Between 5,000 and 6,000 separate documents are now published each year by the Stationery Office. Most of them are sold at the low prices characteristic of government publications, so it is evident that the total annual sale of about £200,000 represents an enormous number of purchases.

Government Publications in the past

Although it was established as long ago as 1786, the Stationery Office did not sell publications directly to the public before 1913. Until that year the work was undertaken by wholesale agents who paid for the privilege.

Government publications have a longer history than the Stationery Office itself, for the great series of parliamentary papers can be traced back through the 18th century to the Civil War struggles of Parliament with Charles I.

However, it was not until after the Union of the Irish and British Parliaments in 1801 that the great stream of parliamentary papers began. Continuously since that year they have illustrated all manner of social, economic, and political problems. Until 1836 they were not sold to the public, and students of public affairs as eminent as Jeremy Bentham or Charles Knight could only obtain copies through the good offices of an M.P. For fifty years, from 1837 to 1882, all the parliamentary papers of the House of Commons were sold by the printers to the House, the famous firm of Hansard, whose name was for so long associated with reports of parliamentary debates. After 1882 the Stationery Office was appointed publisher both to the House of

Lords and House of Commons, though sales to the public were still conducted through an agent. Now it conducts the work itself.

The work of printing many of the non-parliamentary papers of the various government departments was arranged by the Stationery Office from the beginning of the 19th century, but this class of government publications, with the exception of the historical publications of the Public Record Office, did not begin to gain importance until the end of the 19th century. Since the war of 1914-1918 there has been a vast increase in the number of non-parliamentary publications owing to the development of the social services and other government activities.

Parliamentary Papers

Often referred to as "White Papers" when they are small pamphlets without the familiar blue covers, or as "Blue Books" when such a cover is provided, parliamentary papers are frequently in the news. A more exact description of parliamentary papers would have to distinguish the main classes into which they fall.

There is in the first place the *Votes and Proceedings* of the House of Commons, containing the daily agenda and the record of the previous day's proceedings (first sold by the House in the 17th century) and the *Minutes* of the House of Lords. The *Journals* of both Houses have a venerable history, reaching back to Plantagenet days, although the House of Commons Journals were not printed until 1742.

More popular than these formal documents are the verbatim *Official Reports* of the *Debates* in both Houses. These were first published in full in 1909, although there had been summarised reports continuously since 1802, when Cobbett began the work. It was continued for the greater part of the 19th century by the firm of Hansard, Cobbett's printers. Every word spoken by members of both Houses until about eleven o'clock at night is now printed by the Stationery Office in two pamphlets (one for the Lords, another for the Commons) in time for delivery in London at 9 a.m. the following morning. When the Houses sit later, the subsequent proceedings appear in the following day's official report.

Bills discussed in both Houses are placed on sale, and also

Acts of Parliament when they have received Royal assent. The series of *Reports, Accounts and Papers*, now numbered in two series called H.C. and H.L. Papers, contain important information bearing upon the government and administration of the country, often dealing with controversial questions. Others contain important financial statistics, such as the Estimates and Appropriation accounts (audited statements of public expenditure) and the Trade and Navigation accounts, Great Britain's monthly trade barometer. The series of *Command Papers*, so called because they are presented to Parliament by command of H.M. The King as head of the executive departments of State, includes the reports of important Royal Commissions and important statements on government policy.

The fact that parliamentary papers fall into these few broad classes makes it possible to issue them in numerical sequences and to fix subscription rates for sets of them at prices considerably below the face value of all the individual publications in the sets.

Non-Parliamentary Papers

The mass of non-parliamentary publications do not fall into broad classes, unless the names of the executive departments or organisations responsible for them can be so described. Grouping by departments is the simple rule followed in the official catalogues of the Stationery Office, and free lists of the available current publications of all the large departments are prepared and periodically revised.

In this Brief Guide an attempt will be made to give examples from the vast output of the Stationery Office of publications, both parliamentary and non-parliamentary, under the few broad general subject headings used every month in the descriptive section of "Government Publications," the monthly catalogue of all new official documents.

AGRICULTURE

Recent years have brought a greatly increased attention to agricultural problems. Scientific research into improved methods of cultivation, in the protection of crops from insects and pests, and in the introduction of new techniques, such as

artificial grass-drying, is bringing about profound changes in Britain's most ancient industry. On the commercial side efforts are continuously going on to bring a better adjustment of supply to demand and to meet the needs of new industries dependent upon agriculture, such as the canning and the sugar-beet industries.

Research is now directed largely under the oversight of the Agricultural Research Council with funds provided by the Development Commission. The main administrative tasks, however, in connection with the award of research grants to laboratories and experimental farms remain the care of the Ministry of Agriculture for England and Wales and the Scottish Department of Agriculture in Edinburgh. Each of these official bodies issues publications through H.M. Stationery Office.

The publications of the Ministry of Agriculture are the most numerous, and of them the most popular are its *Leaflets* and *Bulletins*. The *Leaflets* give short, simple accounts of many agricultural problems—dairying, poultry, manures, weeds, pests, etc.—and a number of them are issued in book form as *Collected Leaflets* (“British Birds,” No. 5, 1s. 6d. ; “Diseases of Potatoes,” No. 3, 1s. 6d., etc.). The *Bulletins*, of which there are now over 100, are more extensive studies, usually of general subjects such as “Diseases of Farm Animals” (No. 1, 7th edition, 2s.), the “Improvement of Grass Land” (No. 3, 5th edition, 1s. 6d.), “Artificial Fertilizers” (No. 28, 2nd edition, 3s.), “Rotation of Crops” (No. 85, 3rd edition, 9d.).

They are well illustrated, and recent issues have attractive coloured covers. Selling at prices varying from 6d. to 3s. or 4s., they are steadily in demand and are frequently revised and reprinted. They bring the results of the latest research and technical investigations to farmers and market gardeners in handy form, easy to follow and full of practical recommendations.

Many people who do not depend on agriculture for a living have found some of the *Bulletins* very helpful in their gardens (e.g. “Herbs,” No. 76, 1s., “Pests of Ornamental Garden Plants,” No. 97, 3s. 6d., “Asparagus,” No. 60, 2nd edition, 1s., “Salad Crops,” No. 55, 2nd edition, 1s. 6d., “Mushroom Growing,” No. 34, 3rd edition, 1s. 3d.), or on their allotments (*Allotments, Their Acquisition and Cultivation*, a Complete Handbook, No. 90, 1s.).

Both the English and Scottish departments issue illustrated magazines. The monthly *Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, a well-illustrated periodical of 96 pages or more each issue, is good value for the six shillings a year, post free, which is all it costs. The *Scottish Journal of Agriculture* appears four times a year (4s. 6d. a year, post free).

The "Annual Report of the Agricultural Research Council" is an important document for all who wish to follow the development of new methods on the land.

The commercial and marketing end of agriculture has been studied by occasional committees and Royal Commissions, and there is the series of factual surveys known as the Economic Series (or Orange Books), many of which also contain important recommendations leading to far-reaching co-operative control of various branches of agricultural production, such as potatoes (No. 34, 6d.), wool (No. 35, 6d.), milk (Nos. 38, 6d. ; No. 44, 1s.).

ART AND SCIENCE IN THE MUSEUMS

The magnificent collections of treasures of art and science in the national museums and galleries of Great Britain are renowned throughout the world. Although millions of people visit these institutions every year, there are many more who can rarely, if ever, see a small part of the wealth they contain.

The museums and galleries cater for both classes by their provision of illustrated handbooks, guide-books, and reproductions. Many of the latter are in the form of postcards, some in colour, and are sold for 1d. or 2d. each. There are also larger reproductions ; and the bigger museums have in addition published some very attractive handbooks and pamphlets. The best introduction to this wide field of interest is the pocket "Brief Guide to the National Museums and Galleries of London" (6d.), with its short account of the history and principal contents of all the London museums and of the main publications of each. It is attractively illustrated with very many small photographic reproductions and street plans showing where the London museums are situated. The *New Statesman and Nation* described it as "a model guide-book in its concision, taste, and accuracy." Another Stationery Office publication is the "Monthly List of Lectures" at the London national museums

and galleries (*1d.* per month, *1s. 6d.* post free per annum). It shows at a glance the full range of lectures each month, and on the back are given notes about the times of opening, special exhibitions, etc., of each institution.

The Stationery Office acts as publisher for the Science Museum at South Kensington, the Public Record Office Museum, and the Home Office Industrial Museum. It also acts as bookseller to the British Museum in Bloomsbury, the Natural History Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington.

DEFENCE

Under this heading now come not only the many publications of the Navy, Army, and Air Force and Imperial Defence Committee, but also of the Air Raid Precautions Department of the Home Office. The majority of the publications of the three armed services are naturally specialised. These include King's Regulations for each service, and numerous training handbooks and the technical manuals dealing with equipment. But among them are quite a number of publications of more general interest. Such for example are the "Physical and Recreational Training Handbook" of the Admiralty (issued in two volumes, I, Physical Training, *6s.*; II, Recreational Training, *2s. 6d.*) and the "Manual of Naval Cookery" (*3s. 6d.*), which finds a use wherever large numbers must be catered for. A best seller among the publications of the Admiralty has been the "Admiralty Manual of Wireless Telegraphy" a comprehensive treatise on general principles which thousands of radio enthusiasts have used to acquire a working knowledge of the theory of their subject. A new edition in two parts is in preparation.

Air Ministry publications include manuals on "Air Navigation" (*6s.*), volumes instructing beginners how to fly ("The Flying Training Manual," Part I: Land planes *6s.*) and the "Air Pilot" for Great Britain and Ireland (1937, *15s.*). Many of these publications find obvious uses amongst civil aviators who are also interested in the examination papers set for the Civil Air Navigator's Licence.

The Imperial Defence Committee has supervised the publication of the Official History of the War of 1914-1918, and has

arranged publication through the Stationery Office of the Official Medical History (10 volumes) and the Histories of the War in Macedonia (2 volumes), Mesopotamia (4 volumes), Egypt and Palestine (2 volumes), Togoland and the Cameroons (1 volume). Histories of other campaigns of the Great War and the Naval History are published not by the Stationery Office but by other publishers.

The rapidly growing series of small handbooks on air-raid precautions is striking testimony to the realisation of the changed character of modern warfare and to the dangers of unrestricted bombardment of cities from the air. The sales of this series of publications already exceed one million.

ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS

General Works

Under this broad heading a bewildering variety can be grouped and a huge library could be got together on the subject made up exclusively of government publications. Since these publications arise from a study of practical difficulties and problems, they do not fall readily into the broad classifications of land, labour, capital, income, etc., with which readers of text-books on economics will be familiar, but nevertheless they form the raw material for the study, illustration and application of economic theory.

There are separate lists of the publications of those government departments, such as the Board of Trade, Ministry of Labour, and Ministry of Health, which contribute largely to the official literature on social and economic questions. Parliamentary papers are another very fruitful source of such material. Since nearly every official publication under this broad heading will nowadays contain some statistics, there is an invaluable annual guide to the whole field in the "Guide to Current Official Statistics" (1s.). This volume has been issued since 1922 as a subject index and list of each year's statistical publications. The practice of issuing collections of statistical facts secured by various government departments in the course of their work dates from the first issue of the "Statistical Abstract for the United Kingdom" in 1854. The most recent annual issue of this invaluable reference work to very many aspects of

the economic and social life of the country was the 81st number, containing statistics for the fifteen years 1913 and 1923 to 1936 (Cmd. 5627, 7s.). It is supplemented by the "Statistical Abstract for the British Empire" for each past ten years (the 66th number was the volume for 1927-1936, Cmd. 5582, 3s. 6d.) and the "Abstract of Labour Statistics," a volume now compiled by the Ministry of Labour giving detailed information on very many aspects of the human element in national industry (22nd issue relating to 1922-36, Cmd. 5556, 3s. 6d.).

General works such as these save students an immense amount of detailed research in the collection and compilation of essential facts upon which any fruitful study of current national problems must be based. They also point the way to many other official publications dealing with some aspects of the questions in greater detail. A few of the more important of these may be briefly mentioned here as samples of the rich stores of material now available.

Vital Statistics

The numbers, growth or decline, ages, and health of the people are obviously the foundation of its national well-being. The only manner in which this aspect of the national economy can be studied is by the process of counting the population and obtaining such additional information relating to ages, occupations, etc., as may be possible in the process, supplementing it by the system of requiring the registration of births and deaths. Counting the population, or the census, as it is usually called, began in 1801, not at the instigation of the Government of the day, but as the result of a proposal of a private member of the House of Commons. It aroused some opposition at the time, but since then every ten years has witnessed a new census, of which the results appear in massive statistical volumes published by the Stationery Office. They give the results for each county and summarise the national figures in general surveys (England and Wales, 1931 Census, 11s. ; Scotland, 1931 Census, 13s.). The data so collected are reworked to provide material of special interest, such as the volumes showing the industries (32s. 6d.), the occupations (30s.), and housing conditions (6s. 6d.) of the people. The Occupations and Industries tables for Scotland were in one volume (25s.). Every year the Registrars of

England and Wales and of Scotland prepare annual surveys based on the figures of births and deaths, from which it is possible not only to estimate the growth of the population since the last census, but also to follow the rise or fall in deaths from various diseases in all the local government divisions of the country and for various ages of the population. An interesting booklet briefly reviewing the "Story of the General Register Office and its Origins from 1538 to 1937" was published to commemorate the centenary 1837-1937 of the Registration Service in England and Wales (1937, 6d.)

Employment and Production

An answer to the next question which may logically arise, What do all the people do? is very fully provided, partly by the census volumes themselves (on Industries and Occupations) and partly by the publications of the Ministry of Labour and Board of Trade. Information on the subject arises, for instance, because the Ministry of Labour, in general oversight of the scheme of unemployment insurance, knows exactly how many people are contributing to the Unemployment Insurance Fund. Although by no means all workers are in this class, its recent extension to agricultural workers makes the figures of first-class importance over national industry as a whole. The monthly *Ministry of Labour Gazette* (7s. a year, post free) gives an invaluable running-commentary on this and other questions. Among these other questions is the melancholy opposite of employment, the unemployment from which no industrial nation catering for fluctuating world markets seems able to escape. In some few districts of Great Britain unemployment has, since the war, been chronic and persistent. Known as the Special Areas, they have been and now are the subject of constant study and experiment, and many government publications have been devoted to them. In the summer of 1932 five volumes appeared containing studies of the subject by university bodies within each afflicted area. Since then two Special Commissioners have been appointed, one for England and Wales and another for Scotland, and their periodical reports contain the record of that constant study and experiment which has just been mentioned.

Production, the end of all industry, is also measured by

periodical censuses. The output of the land or agricultural production is assessed every year in the annual statistics of acreage, production, livestock and prices of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (two volumes : Part I, 1935, Part II, 1s. 6d. each) and of the Department of Agriculture for Scotland (Part I, 1935, 9d. ; Part II, 6d. The issue for Scotland for 1936 and in future will be in one volume).

Industrial productivity was specially measured in a census of production first taken in 1906. The last census was in 1935 (General Report in the press). When a general tariff was adopted in 1932 provision was made for an annual survey of British Industry under tariff protection, which has resulted in the publication each year of a census of production for many industries (for the years 1933, 1934, and 1935). When a general census of production is taken, as in 1935, it supplements the information provided by the special census. The preliminary results of each census of production are published as soon as they are available as special supplements to the *Board of Trade Journal* and are included in the annual subscription of 30s. post free. There is a special weekly summary of the output of the coal-mines of the country, and these figures are another valuable regular feature of the *Board of Trade Journal*.

Trends in industrial employment are strikingly illustrated in the annual "Survey of Industrial Development," issued by the Board of Trade (Return showing new factories opened, etc., in 1936, 9d.) and the "Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and workshops" of the Home Office (Report for 1936, Cmd. 5514, 2s.).

Among the general surveys of national economic problems the Report of the Macmillan Committee on Finance and Industry (Cmd. 3897, 1931, 5s.) stands out as one of the more important economic publications in the post-war era.

National Income

The amount of income received by all people paying income tax is summarised and analysed in the "Annual Report by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue" (80th Report, year 1937, Cmd. 5574, 1s. 3d.). There is no similar return for wage-earners and other workers whose incomes do not come within the income-tax limits, but the *Ministry of Labour Gazette* prints

each month a great deal of information relating to average wage rates and numbers employed in many important industries.

Cost of Living

The official figure indicating fluctuations in the cost of living is also published each month in the *Ministry of Labour Gazette*. Since the war it has played a very important part in negotiations relating to wages and salaries. Special interest was aroused in 1937, when the Minister of Labour announced plans for collecting large sample budgets all over the country as a basis for a recalculation of the figure now in use.

Among other official bodies interested in this factor is the Food Council, which conducts a continuous survey of the price of foodstuffs in general consumption, such as milk, meat, bread, etc. The annual report of the Council was first printed for the year 1936 (*6d.*). The work of the Council began after a Royal Commission had studied in great detail the whole question of food prices and had examined possible means of subjecting them to some form of control in the interests of consumers (Report, Cmd. 2390, 1925, 3s. 6d.).

Other Social Questions

There is a great miscellaneous official literature which does not readily fall under any of the few main headings grouped above. The national social services now involve a national expenditure or transfer of national income amounting to over £500 millions, compared with a mere £22 millions or so at the close of the 19th century. The annual summary statement analysing the way in which these huge amounts are now made up is a White Paper, often referred to as the Drage Return after the name of the M.P. who first secured its publication. (Return for the years 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1935, and 1936, Cmd. 5609, 4d.)

It is impossible to list anything like a representative sample of government publications under this heading in this short account. The annual reports of the Ministry of Health (18th for 1936-37, Cmd. 5516 5s.), of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry ("On the State of Public Health," year 1936, 4s., and "The Health of the School Child," year 1936, 2s.) and of the Department of Health for Scotland (8th for 1936, Cmd. 5407,

3s.) are of capital importance, and much also may be learned from the annual reports of the Unemployment Assistance Board (Report for 1936, Cmd. 5526, 3s.) and of the Ministry of Labour (Report for 1936, Cmd. 5431, 2s. 6d.).

It is, however, the occasional rather than the periodical or serial publications which often are the sole source of detailed information on subjects of great national interest. These will usually be reports of Committees and Royal Commissions printed as parliamentary papers. Such in recent years have been the reports on :

“ Lotteries and Betting ” of 1933 (Cmd. 4341, 3s.) ; “ Industrial Assurance,” 1933 (Cmd. 4376, 2s.) ; “ Prison Labour,” 1933 (Cmd. 4462, 1s. 6d. and 4897, 1935, 1s. 3d.) ; “ Sterilization of the Unfit,” 1934 (Cmd. 4485, 2s.), described by the *Daily Telegraph* as “ an authoritative document of first-class medical and social importance ” ; “ Sky-Writing,” 1932 (H.C. 95, 7s.) ; “ Migration Policy,” 1934 (Cmd. 4689, 1s. 6d., 1932, Cmd. 4075, 1s. 6d.) ; and “ Corporal Punishment,” 1938 (Cmd. 5684, 2s. 6d.).

EDUCATION

The departments contributing to the flow of official printed books and pamphlets on this subject are principally the Board of Education and the Scottish Education Department.

The educational system as a whole has been very successfully described in an “ Outline of the Structure of the Educational System in England and Wales ” (Educational Pamphlet No. 94, 9d.). With this little volume may be bracketed the series of pictorial charts published as Educational Pamphlet No. 105 (4s.). A running-commentary on significant developments each year is provided by the annual report of the Board with its accompanying series of statistical appendices. These annual volumes are by no means the dry compilations which their title might suggest. Thus the “ Report ” for 1935 Cmd. 5290 (3s. 6d.) summarised in an opening chapter the significant changes in public education which had occurred in the twenty-five years following the accession of H.M. George V.

The Board of Education does not directly interfere with methods of teaching adopted in the elementary and secondary

schools of the country, neither does it seek to influence the choice of text-books made by the responsible educational authorities. Its naturally close interest in the curriculum of studies is, however, shown in a number of careful reviews of teaching methods in various subjects. Of these the most important is the general "Handbook of Suggestions for the consideration of Teachers and Others concerned in the Work of Public Elementary Schools," a new edition of which appeared in 1937, a handsomely produced volume of 599 pages bound in blue cloth (2s.). This little volume is the "iron ration" of all teachers in elementary schools, since it compresses the wisdom acquired after long years of practical study and experience by the Board's Inspectors.

The series of Educational Pamphlets contains a number of studies in greater detail of teaching methods in single subjects and on other questions (*e.g.* "Science in Senior Schools," No. 89, 1s. 3d., "Senior School Mathematics," No. 101, 1s. ; "Music," No. 95, 9d., "Homework," No. 110, 1s. 3d., "Education of Backward Children," No. 112, 1s.) In the reconstruction period after the Great War of 1914-1918 there were several attempts at a revaluation of teaching methods by well-known figures in the educational world, and their work has exercised a profound and enduring influence. Particularly is this true of "The Teaching of English in England" (1s. 6d., 2s. 6d. in cloth), which became a classic immediately upon its publication in 1921 and has since been continually reprinted. Other similar studies were "The Classics in Education" (2s.), "Modern Studies" (dealing with modern languages, 2s.) and "Natural Science" (1s. 6d.).

In recent years the reports of the Board's Consultative Committee of educational experts have made educational history. The Hadow Report, a household word in educational circles, is the short title for the Committee's "Report on the Education of the Adolescent" (2s.), which since its appearance in 1926 has provided the foundation for a general reorganisation of education after the elementary school stage ends when boys and girls become fifteen years of age. The "Report on the Primary School" (1931, 2s. 6d.) was a thorough investigation of school teaching in the earlier years of the elementary school-child's life. The Consultative Committee then turned its attention to the infant and nursery schools, the value of whose contribution had already been made clear by several pioneering

experiments. The report which it produced on that subject (1933, 2s. 6d.) has become a standard work. It was followed by the Board's own descriptive pamphlet on "Nursery Schools and Classes," No. 106 in 1936 (1s. 6d.).

Education to fit the rising generation to earn its living and to improve the efficiency and productive capacity of British industry and commerce has been a special care of the Board upon which it has issued a considerable number of pamphlets and special studies (*e.g.* "Education for the Printing and Allied Trades," No. 103, 2s., "Trade and Training of the Carpenter and Joiner," No. 97, 1s., "Instruction for Coal Mining," No. 96, 1s. 3d., "Education for the Engineering Industry," 1s. 3d.).

These publications lead naturally to a brief mention of the general series of informative surveys of the conditions of entry into various trades and professions, the "Choice of Occupations" leaflets and the "Choice of Careers" pamphlets prepared to give boys and girls from elementary and secondary schools and their parents and advisors some sound guidance on the often difficult task of finding a suitable job (*e.g.* occupations for elementary school children: Needle Trades, Building, Engineering, Laundry, 1d. each; careers for secondary school children include Accountancy, Agriculture, Horticulture and Forestry, Insurance, Journalism and Publishing, Nursing, Transport, etc., 4d. each).

HISTORY AND ARCHÆOLOGY

The national archives of Great Britain, thanks to its history of relative freedom from fierce internal disturbances, are one of the finest of any European state. It is true that they were by no means carefully preserved until the Public Record Office was established in 1838 and that masses of possibly valuable material have perished. However, the bulk remaining is enormous.

It was not until the beginning of the 19th century that the gigantic task was put in hand of making the national records more generally available. A Record Commission was established and it set to work. Its most notable product was the magnificent edition of the Statutes of the Realm. Only 500

copies of each of its eleven massive folios were printed, and the edition has long been out of print and scarce.

Nearly twenty years after the establishment of the Public Record Office a new series of publications was put in hand, the editing and printing of the texts of medieval chronicles, letters, and other early works. Few of these works could be described in any sense as State documents, but their value to students of English history in the Middle Ages is naturally immense. The scores of volumes of the *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* form the corner-stone of every historical library. Many of the volumes were edited by some of the foremost historical scholars of the latter half of the 19th century. Bishop Stubbs undertook many in the twenty-five years he worked in this field, and there is one from the prince of legal and constitutional historians, F. W. Maitland (*Memoranda de Parlamento*, 1893, 10s.).

After thirty years' work on these mediæval chronicles the Public Record Office policy was suddenly changed, and it has since been confined to editing and publishing the state records of which it is custodian. In the last fifty years a wealth of material, also very largely of medieval interest, has been made available as a guide to scholars. The records are calendared, which means, in the words of the "Oxford English Dictionary," that they are "arranged, analysed, and indexed." The fact that they are now translated from medieval Latin is a boon for which many students will be sufficiently grateful.

It is impossible to attempt any descriptive account of the hundreds of volumes of the medieval Chancery Rolls, the Charter Rolls, Close Rolls, Patent Rolls and Fine Rolls, the Inquisitions Post Mortem and the Feudal Aids.

Documents relating to more modern times have also been reprinted. The Treasury books, beginning in 1557, with their illuminating introductions, are throwing a flood of light on a hitherto little-studied aspect of the public administration of England. One of the most interesting among the series of the Public Record Office volumes is the edition of comments upon English affairs contained in foreign archives, of which the Venetian is the earliest and longest. In the 36 volumes compiled from the Venetian State Papers it is possible to read an almost continuous commentary upon affairs in this island from the pen of shrewd and cultivated observers intended for the

information of their masters in Venice. The story begins in A.D. 1202 and the last volume published took the account up to the year 1670.

Other modern series are of great interest for students of imperial colonial and American history, notably the Calendars of Colonial State Papers, beginning in 1574, the Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations, Volume XII, 1764-1767 (32s. 6d.).

There is an admirable "Guide to the Manuscripts preserved in the Public Record Office," by M. S. Guiseppi, of which the first deals with legal records (12s. 6d.), the second with State Papers and records of public departments (6s.).

Private Historical Manuscripts

State publication of an enormous amount of historical material in private possession; letters, diaries, deeds, and manuscript material of all kinds has been and is still being undertaken by the Stationery Office for the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts. These calendars and reprints of historical material appear as non-parliamentary publications. Many of the Calendars are indispensable to students, and references abound in historical studies to such series as the "Stuart MSS.," printed from documents in Windsor Castle belonging to H.M. The King, the "Portland MSS." and the "Cecil MSS.," a rich series the reproduction of which between the years 1306-1604 was made possible by the consent of the Marquis of Salisbury.

In recent years the Royal Commission has begun the work of indexing its vast output. Each volume now has a very full and satisfactory index, but a single index to the series is naturally a tremendous aid in research. An index of places mentioned in the reports appeared in 1914 (1s.) and the first part of a composite index of persons (A-Lever) appeared in 1936 (15s.).

Social and Economic History

Many government publications which were originally issued to make a practical contribution towards the solution of live contemporary problems have, after an intervening period of neglect, taken on a new lease of life as historical documents of first-rate importance. This is particularly true of many of the

parliamentary papers of the early 19th century containing verbatim records of discussions upon the economic and social difficulties of the industrial revolution. They are mainly "pathological," as enquiries were only instituted when things began to go wrong, but such dislocation of some parts of the national economy is evidence of changing conditions and therefore of the process of historical development. Among the many subjects upon which reports exist were poverty and distress, the introduction of machinery and the troubles it brought to certain classes such as the framework knitters and handloom weavers, the coming of the railways, sanitation in the growing towns, the employment of children and women in factories, conditions of work in factories, mines, and workshops, emigration, and the need of expansion and reform in the system of public administration. Many of these old reports are out of print and scarce. Indexes to them exist and will be referred to in the concluding pages of this Guide.

Britain's Ancient Monuments

Interest in the historical remains of past centuries has steadily grown during the present century, and it has received an inspiring lead in the publications of the three Royal Commissions on Historical Monuments for England, Wales, and Scotland. These beautiful volumes giving an inventory of the archæological remains of Great Britain set a new standard in British official publishing. Their distinctive characteristic is their wealth of illustration by original photographs taken specially during each survey as it is being carried on county by county by the Commissions and their staff of experts. When completed they will constitute a permanent record of the many objects of historical interest in Great Britain.

Each volume as it appears has been welcomed by a chorus of praise from the press and the public. *The Times*, for instance, said of the four volumes on Essex that, "If any one is inclined to doubt the usefulness of undertaking such a survey in all parts of the country, these four volumes on a single county should reassure him."

London has been described in five volumes, one of which was devoted to Westminster Abbey (21s.), a work which the *New York Times* said: "Will be generally recognised as the

finest account ever published of the architectural glories of Westminster Abbey." Hereford, Huntingdon, Buckingham, Hertford, and Westmorland have also been surveyed by the English Royal Commission. The Commissions for Scotland and Wales have completed relatively more of their task than the much larger task facing the English Commission.

The Office of Works has also made a useful contribution in this field by issuing a series of illustrated guide-books to the many national monuments now in its care, such as Hampton Court (1s.), the Tower of London (2d.), Caernarvon Castle (6d.), Stonehenge (6d.), Edinburgh Castle (6d.), and many others from Tintagel in Cornwall to Skara Brae in the Orkneys. Three neat little pocket general guides covering England (1s. each) have also appeared, the work of the Rt. Hon. Ormsby Gore, M.P., a former Chief Commissioner of Works. A fourth volume covering South Wales is in the press.

Maps

Ordnance Survey maps published by the Ordnance Survey Office and sold also by the Stationery Office give much information to those who visit the many interesting districts of historic Britain. The historical maps of Roman England and of England in the 17th century will have a fascination for students of history, as well as for many inquiring tourists.

History of Parliament

After a Committee of distinguished historians had concluded that ample materials existed from which a comprehensive history of Parliament could be compiled, and had advised the Government that such a history would be of value, arrangements were made to publish through the Stationery Office such volumes as might be written by an unofficial Committee which should be responsible for its own costs and for the collection of private contributions for research. The first volume, giving short biographies of 2,000 members of the House of Commons between A.D. 1439 and 1509, appeared in 1936, with an introduction by Colonel the Rt. Hon. Josiah Wedgwood, D.S.O., M.P., Secretary of the Committee, who had for many years been actively collecting materials for such a work.

The history, which will be as much an encyclopædia about

Parliament as a history in the ordinary meaning of the word, is planned on a large scale and it is estimated that it will take at least forty years to complete.

IMPERIAL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The foundation of any study of this subject may be said to exist in the imposing series of "British and Foreign State Papers," an annual collection of important treaties, international agreements, constitutions, and similar important documents relating to all the countries of the world. The 135th volume in this series, containing documents relating mainly to 1932, was published in 1937 (30s.). More up-to-date texts of treaties and agreements become available as White Papers (Command Papers) in the Treaty Series published for the Foreign Office. An annual index of them also appears. When documents in the Treaty Series relate to commercial matters they are included with the *Board of Trade Journal* as a free service to its subscribers (30s. a year, post free).

A number of miscellaneous publications of specialised interest are from time to time issued, such as the record of the international Universal Postal Convention at Cairo, 1934 (3s.), and the telegraph, telephone, and radio communication agreements at Madrid in 1932 (4 volumes, 11s. : these were Post Office documents), the Documents of the London Naval Conference (1936, 17s. 6d.), and the text of the Italian Penal Code (1931, 3s. 6d.).

The Reports of British delegates to the Council of the League of Nations and to the International Labour Office are published by the Stationery Office and the Covenant of the League of Nations is re-issued as amendments to it become necessary (1938 edition, 6d.).

Diplomatic History

A remarkable innovation in the publication of Foreign Office documents was made when two distinguished British historians, Dr. G. P. Gooch and Professor Harold Temperley, were asked by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to select and edit such of the archives of the Foreign Office as they considered valuable for the light thrown upon the policy of

Great Britain in its relation to the outbreak of war in 1914. The results have occupied eleven imposing volumes, three of which have been in two parts, issued between 1926 and 1938. An index volume will follow. These volumes are principally made up of despatches to and from diplomatic representatives, but they also consist of minutes and memoranda by Foreign office officials with occasional comments by H.M. Queen Victoria, King Edward VII, and King George V.

Imperial affairs are the concern of the Dominions and Colonial Office, the India Office and of some Imperial Committees, such as the Imperial Economic Committee, the Imperial Defence Committee, and the Imperial Shipping Committee.

An important series of publications is the annual reports on the various non-self-governing colonies (on sale separately or £2 10s. a year, post free, for all reports).

Interesting special problems in the colonies, etc., are the subject of reports from time to time such as those on Broadcasting Services in the Colonies (1937, 6*d.*), the question of child "slavery" or *Mui Tsai* in Hong Kong (1937, 5*s.*), and the Memorandum on the Education of African Communities (1935, 6*d.*).

Economic conditions are now reported upon in one large annual volume, "Economic Survey of the Colonial Empire" (1933 edition, 25*s.*). The Customs Tariffs of the Colonial Empire are issued in 3 volumes (10*s.* 6*d.*).

LEGAL AND STATUTORY

Acts of Parliament

Each Act of Parliament is published separately as it is passed, and then at the end of every year all the Public General Acts (as distinct from Local and Private Acts) are published in a bound volume, fully indexed, together with a Table showing the effect of the year's legislation.

An index to Local and Private Acts is also published annually.

The "Chronological Table and Index to the Statutes," also issued annually, is, as its title indicates, a complete guide to the Statutes. The first volume sets forth in chronological order the titles of all the Statutes passed since A.D. 1285, whether

repealed or not, with an indication of subsequent repealing Acts. The second volume provides a subject index to all the Acts on the Statute Book. When their bulk of over 2,700 pages is considered, they are a cheap set at 25s. the two volumes.

The committee has supervised the publication of the "Statutes Revised," a complete collection of all Statutes in force from the earliest times. This series must be distinguished from the earlier series "Statutes of the Realm," which reprinted in full the text of every Act whether repealed or not. The last volume of the Revised Statutes, volume 24, published in 1929, carried the series up to the year 1920.

Statutory Rules and Orders

Subordinate in character, but now very numerous and important, are the Statutory Rules and Orders. These regulations are made by Government Departments in the exercise of powers conferred upon them by some Act of Parliament. The great increase in the scope of this "delegated legislation," as it is often called, was the subject of special inquiry in 1932, when a Committee under the Chairmanship of the Earl of Donoughmore issued their "Report on Ministers' Powers" (Cmd. 4060, 2s. 6d.).

Corresponding with the annual volume of the year's Acts of Parliament, an annual volume of Statutory Rules and Orders is published. There is also an Index, issued triennially, to all the Statutory Rules and Orders in force, corresponding to the index volume of the Chronological Table and Index to the Statutes.

All the Rules and Orders issued before 31st December, 1903, and which were still in force on that date, have been published in a series of volumes known as the "Revised Statutory Rules and Orders."

Special Collections

Special annotated collections of Acts relating to the income tax, customs, excise, and death duties have been made for administrative convenience and have been issued in separate volumes. The laws imposing income taxes and cognate taxes in the British Dominions, Colonies, Protectorates, etc., have also been issued in a digest under the title "Income Taxes in the

British Dominions." The collection of "Mining Laws of the British Empire and Foreign Countries," prepared by the Imperial Mineral Resources Bureau, may also be mentioned here. Another very useful volume is the "Index to Statutory Definitions" (1936, 10s.), prepared in the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel.

Law Reports

The judgments of the Courts from which the case law of England has been built up are not published by the Stationery Office except when they relate to certain specific questions, such as the Reports of Tax Cases, *i.e.* decisions in the Courts on disputed points of Tax Law. An Index to these Tax Cases, by Sir Edward R. Harrison, LL.B., is also published by the Stationery Office.

London Gazette

The *London Gazette*, the earliest English newspaper, was an official journal from its first issue in 1666. It has been published continually since that year, and it is now the medium for all manner of official notifications, including the announcement of appointments and promotions in the defence services. It is very largely a medium for legal notices relating to bankruptcy, estates of deceased persons, etc.

MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

General oversight of public health is a duty undertaken by local authorities with the Ministry of Health (England and Wales) and the Department of Health for Scotland as the co-ordinating, advisory, and administrative central departments. The annual reports of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry and the general reports of both departments (mentioned under the heading Economics and Social Questions above) are invaluable general surveys. Both departments promote investigations into public health questions, and the Ministry's series "Public Health and Medical Subjects" now consists of over 80 reports, the latest being the "Report on an Outbreak of Enteric Fever in Bournemouth, Poole, and Christchurch" of 1936 (No. 81, 9d.). When these reports deal with

general questions, as No. 68 dealing with "Maternal Mortality" (1s. 6d.) or No. 64 containing a comprehensive review of the treatment of tuberculosis in sanatoria and elsewhere (3s.), they have a message for many outside the ranks of the medical and nursing professions.

Medical research in Great Britain has since 1914 been actively promoted by the State as a result of the creation of the Medical Research Council, a by-product of the National Health Insurance Scheme of 1911.

The pioneer work of the Council has had world-wide recognition. The investigation which it promoted into the study of vitamins is an outstanding example, and its volume "Vitamins, a Survey of Present Knowledge" (6s. 6d.) has for long been the standard treatise on the subject, as it was one of the earliest. So also has been the work promoted in the study of dental disease undertaken for the Council by Mrs. Mellanby, who succeeded in demonstrating the close connection between dental disease and vitamin D deficiency. Her three pioneer investigations were followed and confirmed by the Committee for the Investigation of Dental Disease ("The Influence of Diet on Caries in Children's Teeth," 1936, 2s.).

Nutrition and dental disease are but two of the subjects upon which the Council has issued many "Special Reports," as its series of publications is called. Others deal with medical aspects of child life, epidemiology and immunity, radium, rickets, tuberculosis, vision and hearing. Between the years 1929-1931 the Council filled a gap in British medical literature by its encyclopædic "System of Bacteriology in Relation to Medicine," a monumental survey of the entire field by prominent specialists. The work is in nine volumes sold at £8 8s. a set. Finally the little pocket volume "Alcohol: its Action on the Human Organism" (1s. or 1s. 6d. in cloth) may be mentioned as a more popular but strictly scientific pronouncement upon a controversial question.

The Defence Forces may also be mentioned under this heading, as one or two practical manuals issued by them have a wide application, especially their handbooks on first-aid and nursing practice, such as the Naval "Manual of Instruction for the Royal Naval Sick Berth Staff" (4s.).

To-day emphasis is being placed upon methods of preventing illness as it has never been before. As a contribution to a

national "Keep Fit" campaign two very useful handbooks on "Recreation and Physical Fitness" were prepared by the Board of Education in 1937. One volume is "for Youths and Men," the other "for Girls and Women." They are sold at a popular price (2s. 6d.) and are both crammed with photographs and practical advice upon all manner of games and exercises.

The close connection between proper feeding and physical well-being revealed by many of the special reports of the Medical Research Council has been studied from its practical aspect by the Advisory Committee on Nutrition of the Ministry of Health (1st Report, 1937, 1s.).

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

It will naturally be expected that the Stationery Office would issue many publications upon the government of the country. There are, of course, very many, although there is no official general handbook on the subject as a whole. The work of many government departments is reviewed each year in their annual reports, and, for those departments which do not issue annual reports, information may be sought in their annual estimates upon which Parliament votes money for the forthcoming year's expenditure and in the annual appropriation accounts in which is set out the audited amount actually spent. Interesting information about details of departmental policy and administration are provided also in the proceedings of the House of Commons Select Committee on Estimates and of the Public Accounts Committee. Civil Servants in charge of the various departments of State appear before these Committees to answer questions about the work of their departments, and the proceedings are printed and published in full.

Occasionally the administrative system as a whole is the subject of a special enquiry, as that promoted by the Ministry of Reconstruction when the famous Haldane Report on the Machinery of Government (1918, Cd. 9230, 1s. 6d.) outlined a proposed re-organisation of the principal departments of State. Other general surveys with an economy motive were the reports of the Geddes Committee after the War of 1914-1918, and the more recent May Committee on National Expenditure (Cmd. 3920, 1931, 4s.).

The work of Parliament itself can be followed in the official report of the Debates of both Houses and in their printed Bills and Amendments to Bills.

The national expenditure each year is reviewed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget speech and may be read in full in the official report of the House of Commons debates next morning. A short summary statement of the general financial position of the previous year is laid before the House at the same time (Statement to 31st March, 1938, H.C. H.C. 103/1938, 4*d.*), and it is followed later by a more detailed volume of "Finance Accounts of the United Kingdom" (1937, issue H.C. 131/1937, 1*s.* 6*d.*). There are separate publications giving details of the national debt. Staff questions in the Civil Service were reviewed by a Royal Commission (Report, Cmd. 3909, 3*s.* 6*d.*).

The Stationery Office also publishes the numerous examination papers set for candidates for the many branches of the public service.

Local Government

Local authorities in England, Wales, and Scotland are responsible for the administration of their areas and the Stationery Office does not print any reports or documents for them. The co-ordinating work of the Ministry of Health and the Department of Health for Scotland is reflected in their publications, especially their circulars, model by-laws, memoranda and annual reports. Some special problems in local government have been the subject of occasional reports, such as those of the Committee on the standardisation and simplification of the requirements of local authorities (dealing with aspects of the question of central purchasing, 1934, 2*d.*, 1935, 6*d.*) and that of the Committee on the qualifications, recruitment, training, and promotion of local government officers (1934, 1*s.* 6*d.*). There is an annual return of Local Government Financial Statistics in three parts (I. Poor Relief, 6*d.*; II. London and County Boroughs, 3*s.* 6*d.*; III. Authorities outside London, 1*s.* 6*d.* The prices relate to the 1934/35 Returns).

The last general review of the system of local government as a whole was that undertaken by a Royal Commission which issued three reports between 1925 and 1929 (Cmd. 2506, *out*

of print., Cmd. 3213, 1s. 6d., Cmd. 3436, 3s.), besides fourteen volumes of evidence and a general index. The work of this Royal Commission was the basis of reforms and two new Acts of Parliament have been passed since it sat ; the Local Government Acts of 1928 (3s.) and 1933 (4s. 6d.). The Local Government of London was studied earlier by a Royal Commission which reported in 1923 (Cmd. 1830, *out of print*).

The Stationery Office now issues a weekly circular to local authorities listing new publications likely to be of value to them.

SCIENCE, INDUSTRY, AND TECHNOLOGY

This omnibus heading covers a multitude of reports upon a field so wide that a booklet twice the size of this Brief Guide could barely do justice to it. This rapid recent growth of government scientific publications is due almost entirely to the establishment of State-aided research services.

The research work in agriculture and in medical science has already been mentioned. Another Committee of the Privy Council is responsible for Scientific and Industrial Research, and it is the reports of this department which now bulk so largely in this field.

The best general guide to the work is the annual report of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, which is presented to Parliament each year (Report for 1936/37, Cmd. 5647, 3s.). The Department is, however, made up of a number of specialised research organisations with their laboratories and research stations, and the largest of these issue their own annual reports and technical publications.

Building

The Building Research Board was established to undertake investigations in a subject which had hitherto depended in the main upon tradition in its use of materials and methods of construction. New principles were established as the research work progressed, and they have been embodied in printed publications and translated into practice by progressive firms all over the country. There have been studies on cements, concretes and plaster, upon the mechanical properties of bricks and brick-

work and brick substitutes. A research of great practical value was the investigation of the corrosion of lead, particularly of lead pipes, in buildings. Constructional problems created by the new technique required in steel-framed buildings many storeys high have been studied by the Steel Structures Research Committee, whose three reports on the subject (1st, 1931, 5s., 2nd, 1934, 7s. 6d., Final Report, 12s. 6d.) have become standard works. In April 1938 the Committee issued a study of the "Welding of Steel Structures" (6s.). Another special committee has made a long and patient study of the deterioration of structures in sea water in the effort to discover enduring materials for constructing piers, docks, and harbour works, etc. Sixteen interim reports giving preliminary results of the investigations had been issued up to the end of 1937. The 15th (1936, 12s. 6d.) gave a general description of the Committee's work up to December 1935.

Engineering

Studies, mainly metallurgical, have been made of such questions as the properties of materials at the high temperatures now common in manufacturing and mechanical processes, and there have also been a series of researches on springs. A Metallurgy Research Board was recently formed, and it has issued a study of "Magnesium and its Alloys" (1937, 2s. 6d.). Another new Board under the Department of allied interest is the Lubrication Research Board. Its first Technical Paper was "The Analysis of Commercial Lubricating Oils by Physical Methods" (2nd edn., 1936, 1s.). General problems in physics are naturally part of the fundamental studies of engineering and the National Physical Laboratory at Teddington, also a part of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, has an active metallurgical division whose work may be followed in the Laboratory's Annual Report (1937, 2s. 6d.), its Abstracts of Papers (for 1936, 1s.), and in occasional special studies such as the "Physical Constants of Pure Metals" (1936, 6d.). Although scientific work in metrology is undertaken by the Laboratory, the responsibility for maintaining the standard weights and measures of the country is undertaken by the Board of Trade. In 1936 the standards were reverified and the relation of British and metric measures was redetermined (Report, 1s.).

Food

War needs enforced an early attention to this subject, and some of the most striking discoveries in food transport and preservation have resulted from the work of the Food Investigation Board (Annual Reports 1918 onwards ; year 1936, 3s. 6d.). The present generation does not, perhaps, realise how much it owes to the scientific miracle by which British apples are preserved fresh until the new crop comes round, and fresh eating apples are brought in perfect condition from the other ends of the earth to Europe for winter and spring consumption. Fresh pears and plums in February would have seemed incredible to our ancestors, but thanks to the work of scientists they are now becoming commonplace. The work was not achieved overnight, and thousands of pounds worth of cargoes of fruit were thrown overboard because they had become rotten in transit before the secret of preserving them was discovered. This is but one aspect of the Board's work, which has extended also to the investigation of canned and preserved foods, cold storage and chilling of meat and fish.

The scientific study of food consumption or nutrition is not part of the Board's work, but has been undertaken by the Medical Research Council, as already noted above. The Council has something to say on imported food and its study of the "Vitamin Content of Australian, New Zealand, and English Butters" (1932, 1s.) gives an answer to the question whether Empire butter is as rich in protective vitamins as the English product. Vegetarians will be interested in the Council's report on "The Nutritive Value of Fruits, Vegetables and Nuts" (1936, 2s.), and may also share in the wider interest of the report on "The Chemistry of Flesh Foods and their Losses on Cooking" (1933, 2s. 6d.).

Forestry

Problems of timber growing are studied by the Forestry Commissioners, whose work has made their name familiar in many parts of England. The problems of using timber are the care of the Forest Products Research Laboratory.

The Forestry Commissioners are naturally concerned only with the trees which can be grown in this country (on which they have issued an invaluable general handbook : "Forestry

Practice," revised edn. 1937, 1s. 6d.) ; as well as other practical guides, *e.g.* " Spring Frosts," showing what precautions can be taken to avert a major disaster to valuable plantations, 1937, 2s. 6d.).

The Forest Products Laboratory deals with timber from all over the world, in addition to the familiar home-grown varieties (on which there is the invaluable " Handbook of Home-Grown Timbers," 1936, 1s. 6d.).

Until the Laboratory began its work there was little scientific research into the timber problems with which it proceeded to grapple. Some of its discoveries are so valuable that thousands of people will wish it had been established many years ago. It has, for instance, shown that the shrinking of wood in houses resulting in cracks in floors and doors can be largely reduced if the timber is dried in kilns before it is used in building. This process is almost as satisfactory as the old and very lengthy method of seasoning and very much cheaper. Dry rot and its prevention, as many property owners know to their cost, is another source of great expense and inconvenience. It also is a problem which has been successfully tackled and solved by the Laboratory, whose first Bulletin, since reprinted, was devoted to it (1s.). Architects, builders, furniture and cabinet makers, as well as carpenters, amateur and professional, and their customers all have cause to be grateful to the Laboratory, whose work is described every year in detail in its annual report (year 1936, 1s. 6d.).

Fuel

The Fuel Research Board is another of the older constituent bodies of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, and it has issued a long series of technical papers as well as a general physical and chemical survey of the national coal resources.

Some of the technical papers deal with very practical domestic problems, as, for instance, the " Heating of Rooms," 1s., " The Domestic Grate," 9d., in which scientific measurement is applied to questions usually settled more or less by guesswork. The majority of the technical papers however are concerned with highly specialised aspects of fuel utilisation, and are studied by industrial heating engineers, gas works engineers, and others,

to whom such works as the Board's volume on "The Calculation of Heat Transmission" (1932, 10s.) are invaluable.

The convenience of using oil and petrol as fuels has raised new problems for Great Britain, with its large coal supplies and its dependence on overseas imports of oil. Scientific methods of producing oil from coal have therefore been closely studied by the Fuel Research Board, which has issued a series of reports on Low-Temperature Carbonisation, the process used for the purpose. The Fuel Research Board also issues a special annual report of its own summarising the achievements of each year (year 1936/37, 3s. 6d.).

Geology

The Geological Survey and Museum is an administrative unit with a far longer history than that of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, of which it now forms a part. In 1935 it celebrated its first centenary, and the occasion has fittingly been marked by the publication of an interesting commemorative volume, "The First Hundred Years of the Geological Survey of Great Britain 1835-1935," by Sir John Flett, K.B.E., D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S. (1936, 7s. 6d.).

The Survey has a long range of publications and maps to its credit, and it has performed for Great Britain a service which few other countries can parallel. The "Memoirs" of the Survey are the specialised monographs describing in careful detail the geology of many districts in England, Wales, and Scotland.

The illustrated handbooks on British Regional Geology, which describe the principal features of broad geological areas of the country (such as the Thames Valley, the Pennines, South Wales, East Anglia, etc.), selling at the uniform price of 1s. 6d. each, are a popular series for the non-specialist.

Radio

The Radio Research Board has played an important part in building up knowledge of the conditions affecting radio reception. Its handbook on the cathode ray oscillograph (1933, 10s.) was an outstanding volume. The Board's regular series of Special Reports includes studies on particular aspects of radio theory and practice, such as "Amplifiers for Radio Reception," 1930 (No. 9, 5s.), "Thermionic Emission" (No. 11, 1932,

2s. 6d.), "Valve Oscillators of Stable Frequency" (No. 13, 1933, 1s.), and "Magnetic Materials at Radio Frequencies" (No. 14, 1934, 6d.). The popular Admiralty Handbook on Wireless Telegraphy has already been mentioned (*see* "Defence").

Water Pollution

A special Research Board was established to deal with the subject in 1927. It does not merely investigate the question of river pollution by waste industrial products (as from beet sugar factories investigated in 1933, 7s. 6d.), but has issued reports on water softening (by the base-exchange or Zeolite process) (1929, 6d.) and on the action of water on lead with special reference to the supply of drinking-water (1934, 2s.). The monthly "Summary of Current Literature" (24s. a year, post free) keeps specialists aware of important new contributions to the subject, and the Board's own annual report contains a more general review of what State-aided research has done and hopes to do to check the evil of poisoned streams and watercourses.

Roads

Scientific experiment with road surfacing and problems connected with it, such as skidding, glare, durability, etc., has been shared between the Ministry of Transport and the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. When the latter Department established the Road Research Board in 1934 a further step forward was made in the application of scientific technique to the practical everyday problems of those who make the roads and of those who use them. The annual reports of the Board (year 1936, 2s. 6d.) provide the best review of advancing knowledge in this sphere.

The Ministry of Transport has issued a number of publications recording the results of experimental work on highways (Report for 1936, 2s.), on street lighting (1937, 9d.), and many more bearing on the question of road accidents. The latter include the detailed analytical statistics showing how and when accidents occurred each year (year ended 31st March, 1937, 1s. 3d.) and reports on special problems, such as Road Safety among School Children (two reports for England and Wales and for Scotland, 1936, 6d. each).

Other State-aided Research Work

Fundamental research work in the various physical sciences of light, sound, electricity, chemistry, etc., is undertaken at the National Physical Laboratory. The range of the Laboratory's work is vast. It includes, for instance, the scientific streamlining of ship forms, aeroplanes, and of moving vehicles generally, made possible by the National Tank and the air tunnel. The Chemistry Research Board, also part of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, also undertakes research work upon many industrial problems, and the Illumination Research Committee has issued a number of reports on basic problems of light transmission ("The Terminology of Illumination and Vision," 6*d.*, "The Measurement of Mean Spherical Candle-Power," 1*s.*), as well as on practical applications of scientific knowledge of great interest (*e.g.* "Daylight Illumination necessary for Clerical Work," 6*d.*, "The Use of Coloured Light for Motor-Car Headlights," 9*d.*).

In addition to the work of the committees of the Privy Council there is a good deal of research which is the work of other departments. The Aeronautical Research Committee of the Air Ministry, housed at Teddington with the National Physical Laboratory, has an impressive library of research monographs in its "Reports and Memoranda" which are annually classified and gathered together in a "Technical Report" (Volume for 1935-36: I. Aerodynamics, 30*s.*; II. Structures, Flutter, Engines, etc., 30*s.*). The Meteorological Office, whose work is also closely connected with that of the Air Ministry, may also be regarded as a research as well as a reporting organisation, for in its series of "Geophysical Memoirs" and "Professional Notes" it makes available the results of many investigations designed to further the science of weather prediction. In the course of its work it has produced some admirable handbooks which serve as text-books for the study of climate and weather generally. These include "A Short Course in Elementary Meteorology" (2*s.* 6*d.*), "The Weather Map" (3*s.*), "The Meteorological Observers Handbook" (5*s.*), and a photographic key to "Cloud Forms" (9*d.*). Weather problems at sea are the subject of "A Handbook of Weather Currents and Ice for Seamen" (4*s.*) and the "Barometer Manual," a text-book of Marine Meteorology (2*s.* 6*d.*).

Scientific research in other spheres must draw largely upon the wealth of existing knowledge preserved in museums and libraries, and it is only necessary to mention here the magnificent collections of the Science Museum and the Natural History Museum at South Kensington and at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew as a bare reminder of the immense services they are able to render to many branches of scientific knowledge. They each have an impressive list of publications which will be of the greatest service to all students in the subjects they represent.

Technology

It will be evident from the brief outline given above that many official publications have a close and immediate application in many branches of technology. There are a number of other publications in the nature of practical manuals. Among these are the manuals of the defence services on subjects such as the construction and operation of aeroplanes, the War Office manuals on the construction of roads and bridges and the maintenance of motor vehicles. Many owner drivers can profit by the complete handbook on motor cars, the "Manual of Driving and Maintenance for Mechanical Vehicles (Wheeled)" (5s.).

The Home Office in its work under the Factory Acts has prepared a series of safety and welfare pamphlets designed to assist manufacturers in safeguarding their staff. Other reports on this subject are contributed by the Industrial Health Research Board (such as its investigation into the liability of London bus and tram-drivers to digestive disturbances, 6d., and the "Toxicity of Industrial Organic Solvents," 7s. 6d.) and by the Medical Research Council (whose special report No. 212 contains an account of a successful piece of research by a German scientist who had studied the cause and cure of respiratory dust diseases in Lancashire cotton mills, 2s. 6d.).

The mining industry, thanks to the work of the Safety in Mines Research Board, has a whole library of official technical literature devoted to its problems. Over 100 special reports of the Board have been issued.

TRADE AND COMMERCE

Knowledge of the trends of trade, both in imports and in the exports which pay for them, is largely dependent on government

publications. The relevant statistics are collected by H.M. Commissioners of Customs and Excise and are annually published in great detail in the four large volumes known as "The Annual Statement of the Trade of the United Kingdom with British Countries and Foreign Countries" (year 1936: I. General Statement of Imports and Exports, 13s., II. Imports, 32s. 6d., III. Exports, 20s., IV. Trade at Ports and with Individual Countries, 25s.).

A monthly publication "Trade and Navigation Returns" gives preliminary trade figures, with an annual summary in each December issue. These statistics, which appear as House of Commons papers (£2 17s. a year, post free), are regularly quoted in the press on publication as evidence of the state of trade from month to month. The Board of Trade also collects trade statistics of other countries and republishes them in the quarterly "Accounts of Foreign Trade and Commerce" (4s. 6d. a year, post free). The *Board of Trade Journal* (30s. a year, post free) also contains trade statistics, as well as valuable information affecting trade in all quarters of the globe. Its service of information on tariffs, trade agreements, etc., is unrivalled, and its annual article on the balance of trade provides an official summary of the commercial balance sheet of Great Britain, including estimates of "invisible exports."

Perhaps the chief contribution made by government publications in the promotion of trade is the series of reports on economic and financial conditions in all the principal countries of the world prepared for the Department of Overseas Trade by British Commercial Diplomatic and Consular Officers. This series, in which between 30 and 40 separate reports are issued every year, is supplied at an inclusive subscription price of £2, but reports on individual countries can of course be bought separately.

The last general survey of the competitive position of Great Britain in world trade and of the conditions for its success was that made by the Balfour Committee on Industry and Trade (Final Report, Cmd. 3282, 1929, 5s. 6d.).

There have been other publications of special interest to particular industries, such as those of the Council for Art and Industry, with their message for all trades in which the design and appearance of their products is a material factor in securing sales. Among them have been "Design and the Designer in

Industry, 1937 ” (1s.) and an interesting investigation of the furnishing and equipment of the working class home (1937, 1s.).

An important annual volume for all merchants and importers is the “ Customs and Excise Tariff ” of the United Kingdom. Editions appear in January and August of each year (1s.). The annual “ Import and Export List ” is a guide to the commodities for which an official return must be rendered (9d.).

The Stationery Office also publishes the various official forms required in the administration of the Mines, Factories and Shop Acts and for the collection of Customs and Excise taxes.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

The revolutionary improvement in communications which was one of the chief contributions of the Industrial Revolution has been crowned by the amazing progress of our own time. By land, sea, and air and by wireless telegraphy and telephony, distance as an obstacle to human contact assumes constantly shrinking importance.

Government publications upon transport questions illustrate this development from many angles. The Ministry of Transport having charge of the administration of legislation governing land transport by road and rail naturally issues many publications on the subject. There are, for example, monthly “ Railway Statistics ” (£1 12s. a year, post free) and annual volumes giving statistics in considerable detail relating to the working of Great Britain’s railways (year 1936, 6s.) while a separate publication lists the number of railway employees and their average rates of pay (1937 edition, 1s.).

Few trades have more regular details regarding the sales of their products than the motor industry, since the Ministry of Transport issues a monthly series of statistics of road vehicles showing the number of cars licensed and the number of new licences each month. The similar taxation returns make it possible to see what horsepower cars are sold (annual subscription £1 5s., post free).

There are also volumes on each year’s record of tramways, trolley-buses, and light-railway undertakings corresponding to the annual railway returns (year 1936–7, 2s.). The replanning of London’s main road system during the next generation is

outlined in the "Highway Development Survey 1937" (7s. 6d.) (Chairman, Sir Charles Bressy).

The B.B.C. and the General Post Office, to which it reports each year (Report 1937, Cmd. 5668, 6d.), are concerned with less tangible forms of transport and communications, but both have grown enormously in public interest in recent years.

Aerial transport on the side of Civil Aviation is subject to the general oversight of the Civil Aviation Department of the Air Ministry, and a report is issued annually.

Transport by sea is the concern of the Mercantile Marine Department of the Board of Trade, which supervises examinations for masters and mates, establishes regulations for the inspection of ships (*e.g.* "Tonnage Measurements," 1s. 3d. ; "Master's and Crew Spaces," 6d.) and prepares also records of registered ships (the "Registry of Ships" is issued monthly, £1 11s. a year, post free ; the "Mercantile Navy List" is an annual list of all British Ships, 1938 edition, 25s.). Safety at sea is a special concern of the Board, with its regulations and reports on such subjects as life-saving appliances (Report 1922, 3s. 6d.), overloading (Report 1929, 6d.), timber deck cargoes (Report 1925, 2s.) and its "Instructions to Surveyors," a series of technical documents setting out rules to be observed in the merchant service. The Board of Trade also inquires into the causes of wrecking of any British ship, and the "Wreck Reports," issued on such occasions, usually cost 3d. a copy.

In its annual statement on "Navigation and Shipping of the United Kingdom" the Board provides a summary statistical review of the activity of the British Mercantile Marine (year 1936, 4s.). In providing a map of the world showing the position of British Empire ships of over 3,000 tons on 7th March, 1936 (5s.), the Admiralty must have brought home to many, in a way which mere statistical returns will never do, a conviction of the extent and vital importance of that resource of Empire, "whereon," in the stately language of the Articles of War, "under the good providence of God, the wealth, safety and strength of the kingdom chiefly depend."

HOW GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS ARE SOLD

The Stationery Office and Booksellers

Government publications are like any other books or periodicals. Any bookseller will get them for you or you can buy them from one of the five Stationery Office shops in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Manchester, or Belfast. The vast number issued each year (about 5,000 to 6,000) makes it impossible for any bookseller to stock even a tithe of them. Even the Stationery Office cannot do this in its own shops, although it can naturally give an immediate service of all the publications of recent years as well as the older ones in more general demand. The pricing policy of the Stationery Office is simple in that it seeks neither to make a profit nor to incur a loss on that part of the edition of any government publication which is sold to the public. Budgeting in the aggregate has made it possible to price most official publications on a scale rate of so many pages for one penny, with additional charges for illustrations and other unusually expensive features. As a result government publications as a whole remain among the cheapest of all published books.

When ordering by post please remember to include enough to cover postage charges.

Deposit Accounts and Standing Orders

Many people find it convenient to run deposit accounts with the Stationery Office to save the bother of sending cheques or postal orders every time they want a government publication.

Standing orders are another convenience for people with special business or professional interests. Hospitals may want all medical research publications, railway officials may want all publications on railways, local authorities everything on local government, while a number of specialist students may need anything published in their own field. For their convenience the Stationery Office accepts "standing orders" to supply such publications as soon as they are issued. The advantages of a deposit account to pay for such supplies are obvious.

Subscriptions

For special classes of publications annual subscription rates have been fixed. This service extends to parliamentary papers

as a whole or in single sections such as the Debates, all Command Papers, the Trade and Navigation Returns, Bills, etc. A full list of subscription rates to these publications and to the more numerous class of periodicals is available post free.

CATALOGUES AND LISTS

Daily List

Issued mainly for administrative convenience, this List can, however, be obtained by any member of the public post free for a subscription of 12s. 6d. a quarter. This amount will be credited when the amount of purchases exceeds 50s. per quarter.

“Government Publications” Monthly List

This monthly catalogue contains two main sections, one of descriptive notes classified under the same broad subject headings as those used in this Brief Guide, the other a complete list of parliamentary publications, Statutory Rules and Orders, and of the various new non-parliamentary publications issued during the month classified under the name of the department responsible for them. A separate section lists the chief reprinted publications of the month and a very comprehensive index is provided. “Government Publications” is supplied free of charge to all customers of the Stationery Office.

Annual List

The entire output of official documents for each year is catalogued in the annual “Consolidated List.” It also has a very full index and is on sale price 1s. net each year, but is supplied free of charge to customers.

Sectional Lists

The non-parliamentary publications of most government departments issuing them in any number, with some reference to important parliamentary papers, are listed separately by departments. The lists currently available include those of all the larger public departments (Admiralty, Air Ministry, Agriculture, Customs and Excise, Colonial Office, Education, Foreign Office, Health, Home Office, Labour, Mines, Public

Record Office, Research, Trade, Transport, Treasury, War Office, and others on Meteorological publications, Historical Manuscripts, Historical Monuments, etc.). A special list contains particulars of subscription rates to periodicals and serial publications.

The last general catalogue of non-parliamentary publications listed the majority of those still available up to 31st December, 1920, including some important publications out of print. Many obsolete volumes issued during the 19th century were, however, omitted from it. This catalogue is now out of print, but is being replaced by sectional lists.

Other Lists and Bibliographies

The huge annual output of government publications, which may be said to have begun as long ago as the year 1801, makes it impossible to hope for any single volume catalogue or indeed any general catalogue of them all as a set of publications. Many catalogues and indexes have been issued during the last hundred years, and they are to be found in larger libraries.

1. *Parliamentary Papers*.—These include the comprehensive Indexes of parliamentary papers relating to papers of both Houses published since 1801, but most of the earlier volumes in this series are now out of print.

The Indexes to parliamentary papers of the House of Commons are now issued annually as the "Numerical List and Index to Sessional Printed Papers" (Session 1935-36, 2s.). Titles and contents are reprinted separately for the convenience of those wishing to bind sets (1935-36, 2s. 6d.). The decennial cumulated volume is still continued (1920-1929, 5s.). The corresponding publication of the House of Lords ceased with the issue for 1871-1884/5 (23s. 11d.), although annual lists continued until 1920. Subsequent to 1920, only an annual list of titles is available.

These volumes are subject indexes. All the publications in them will of course be found (for the post-war period) in the Stationery Office priced catalogues.

2. *Non-Parliamentary Publications*.—There is no subject index to non-parliamentary papers corresponding to the parliamentary indexes, but recent Stationery Office annual lists are fully indexed, and provide adequate references.

The nearest approach to such a general guide is (since 1922) the annual "Guide to Current Official Statistics," whose scope is considerably wider than its title may suggest. It relates of course to parliamentary as well as non-parliamentary publications.

No short summary can deal adequately with the many aspects of national life covered by Government publications. It will be sufficient if this little Guide brings home to everyone who is affected by public policy, whether his immediate interest is a business or a professional or an academic one, that one of the most practical questions he can ask himself when tackling a new problem or reconsidering an old one is "Have I missed a Government publication likely to help me here?" The daily experience of the Stationery Office shows that, faced with this question, many people would have to admit that they did not know about some recent and important official material able to help them. If this Guide lessens that number its work as a simple introduction will have been performed. For what Disraeli told the House of Commons about Government publications is certainly as true to-day as it was when he spoke the words over eighty years ago. "In my opinion" he said, discussing the money to be voted for official printing and publishing, "there is no Vote to which the Committee has given its sanction which is more advantageous for the public service than the present one, which produces a body of information that guides the legislature and influences to a great degree the ultimate prosperity of the country".

