

water, potassium bicarbonate solution, saturated mercuric chloride, strongly alkaline potassium permanganate and concentrated ferrous sulphate solution, and then washing with water and drying and distilling over sodium, the induction period was only 5.1 minutes. When ether purified as above and then once again distilled over MeMgI was used, in addition to the reduction in the induction period, the yield also increased considerably.

The author has confirmed that the Grignard reaction proceeds much slower in benzene than in ether.

A simple method for measuring the relative induction periods and relative rates of formation of Grignard compounds is described and the mechanism of their formation is discussed.

B. H. IYER.

SCIENCE NOTES AND NEWS

Hospital Section for P.A.S.B.

The Pan American Sanitary Organisation, which is also the Regional Office of WHO, is establishing a new section to deal with the problems of surveying, planning, equipping, and modern methods of administration and management of hospitals of the participating governments. Mr. Felix Lamela has been appointed its Chief, with offices at the P.A.S.B. Hqrs. at Washington D.C. The immediate programme of activities includes the organization of the Third Inter-American Institute for Hospital Administrators which will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in April 1950. The Brazilian Government, through the Ministry of Education and Public Health, has appropriated the sum of 300,000 cruzeiros (\$ 15,000) as grant-in-aid to cover in part the cost of organization of this short, intensive academic course of study for hospital administrators of the Western Hemisphere. A prominent group of outstanding educators of the leading educational institutions will form the faculty.

Decrease in Solar Activity

The Kodaikanal Observatory (Annual Report, 1948) observes that the sunspot activity reached its maximum by the middle of 1947 and declined in 1948; and that there has been an equatorial drift of the zones of maximum sunspot activity and a poleward drift of the zones of maximum prominence activity. Twice in 1948, the sun's disc was free from spots unlike the previous two years. Visual and photographic observations of the brilliant comet which appeared in the southeastern sky at dawn in November 1948 were made between November 11 and December 14. The magnetic observatory has a project to correlate solar phenomena with terrestrial magnetic disturbances.

M.Sc. Degree Award

On the recommendation of the Board of Examiners the thesis entitled "Histological Study of Endocrine Organs of *Pteropus Edullis*" by Mr. C. Seetaramayya, M.B.B.S., has been declared to qualify for the M.Sc. degree in Physiology of the Andhra University.

National Nutrition Association of India

The All-India Nutrition Board, founded in 1936, has been reconstituted into the National Nutrition Association of India. Its inauguration was held on 3rd September at Darbhanga Hall, Calcutta. Dr. A. C. Ukil, welcoming the delegates, referred to the import of 4-5 million tons of cereals costing about Rs. 250 crores.

The Honourable Rajkumari Amrut Kaur inaugurating the session discussed how the newer knowledge of Nutrition could help to improve the diet of the lower economic groups. She urged the greater use of subsidiary foods, like sweet potato flour, defatted groundnut cake and potato, with a view to conserve foreign currency.

During the session symposia on (a) Food processing and Food supplements, (b) Population, Production and Public Health, (c) Nutrition Research, were held.

Award for Wool Research

Mr. T. MADHAVA MENON, M.Sc. (Leeds), Professor of Applied Chemistry, Maharaja's College, Ernakulam, has been awarded a Certificate of Merit and Silver Medal by the Worshipful Company of Woolmen of Great Britain in appreciation of his thesis on "The Supercontraction of Animal Fibres". Associated with this award is a money prize offered by the British Wool Federation.