The next section of the book deals with the ages of the earth and a number of astronomical bodies, and with the various means of estimating them. The geological and physical evidence is summarized, and the usefulness of procedures involving natural radioactive substances is discussed very clearly; in this latter connection a brief but comprehensive exposition of atomic and nuclear structure is given. Finally, astronomical and astrophysical data are considered in relation to the history of the sun and the planets.

The many different hypotheses of the origin of the solar system come in for a critical review at this point, mention being made of the significant trends in cosmogonical thought from Kant and Laplace to von Weizsäcker, Alfvén, and Hoyle in the present day. A short epilogue serves to conclude the book, summarizing the previous material and introducing recent developments in cosmic rays and astrophysics.

This extremely abbreviated account of the contents of *The Origin of the Earth* is hardly adequate to describe the work of correlation and integration of the many aspects of scientific endeavor that make up its substance. Much of the material may already be familiar to persons with some degree of technical sophistication, but for those with no such pretention a better introduction to the many facets of modern astronomy could not be imagined. There is a quotation from Barrie on one of the last pages to the effect that "the man of science appears to be the only man who has anything to say just now, and is the only man who does not know how to say it." At least the latter part of this observation must admit of a number of exceptions, among whom the author of this volume deserves a place.

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Briefly Noted

Engineering Research Review

Published by the Engineering College Research Council of the American Society for Engineering Education, the *Review of Current Research and Directory of Member Institutions* outlines the policies and activities of engineering research in the 91 colleges and universities holding membership in the ECRC. Data are furnished for each school on complete research project titles, the names of responsible research administrative officers, policies governing research projects and contracts, the number of personnel engaged in research activities, the annual expenditures, and special conferences and short courses of interest to research workers. Orders for the *Review* (PB 103 947, $2.25) should be addressed to the Office of Technical Services, U. S. Department of Commerce, Washington 25, D. C.

The AEC's Semiannual Reports

Covering the unclassified progress and activities of the Atomic Energy Commission from its establishment in January 1947 to January 1951, a 40-page index of the AEC's first nine semiannual reports to Congress, submitted in January and July of each year in compliance with the requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1946, is now available at 20 cents a copy through the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C. The last six semiannual reports, beginning with July 1948, have included detailed accounts of the following specific fields of AEC operations: the isotopes production and distribution program; the production of fissionable material; research in the life sciences; physical science research; control of radiation hazards in AEC operations; and the Commission's contract policies.

The ninth semiannual report to the Congress summarizes the AEC's program operations for 1950 and also provides a review of the methods which the Commission follows in setting up contracts with industries, research institutions, universities, and colleges. The report (158 pp.) may be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C. for 40 cents per copy.

Physics of Lubrication

The edited progress report on a symposium on the physics of lubrication held jointly by the British Rheologists' Club and the Manchester and District Branch of The Institute of Physics in Manchester from June 29 to July 1, 1950, has been issued as Supplement No. 1 to the *British Journal of Applied Physics*. The report contains a total of eighteen papers and is divided into two sections, the first of which deals with hydrodynamic lubrication and the rheology of lubricants, and the second with boundary layer and extreme pressure lubrication. The Manchester and District Branch of The Institute of Physics has held a symposium each year on some branch of applied physics, with the object of bringing together specialists from industrial, government, and university laboratories. It is expected that reports of future symposia of this nature will continue to appear as supplements to the *British Journal of Applied Physics*. (96 pp. The Institute of Physics. Unwin Brothers Ltd., London, January 1951. 15 shillings).

Nuclear Data

A collection of experimental values of half-lives, radiation energies, relative isotopic abundances, nuclear moments, and cross sections was compiled last year by the National Bureau of Standards Nuclear Group with assistance from groups at Brookhaven National Laboratory, University of California Radiation Laboratory, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Oak Ridge National Laboratory. It is intended to fill the need for a periodic "census", as NBS director E. U. Condon remarks in the Foreword, to keep track of the newly identified members of the nuclear population. *Nuclear Data*, NBS Circular 499, can be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C. for $4.25. This price also includes three supplements which include data reported during the three six-month periods ending July 1, 1950, January 1, 1951, and July 1, 1951.