

REVIEWS OF BOOKS : BOEKRESENSIES

THE INTERNATIONAL GEOPHYSICAL YEAR

The International Geophysical Year. By Werner Beudeler.
71 Pages. \$0.60, 3s., 150 fr. Paris: Unesco. 1957.

Contents: Section I. The Earth as a Planet. Section II. The Science of Geophysics. Section III. The International Geophysical Year. Section IV. The Scope of the International Geophysical Year. Section V. The Exploration of the Atmosphere. Section VI. At the Border of the Universe. Section VII. Prelude to Space Flight. Section VIII. Probing into the Sun's Mysteries. Section IX. Exploring the Earth. Section X. A Strange Land—Antarctica. Section XI. Value of the Programme. Glossary.

The international physical year has now begun. It includes scientific observations in every civilized country of the world and expeditions to the Antarctic by several nations. It has brought together in cooperation countries not usually on friendly terms. The newspapers and broadcast stations of the world have publicized various aspects of the I.G.Y. to so great an extent that everyone has heard of it and no man of professional status cares to remain ignorant of its main aims or the means taken to achieve them.

The author has written a simple and easily read account of the development of the idea of the I.G.Y. from earlier and success-

ful, though less ambitious, attempts at scientific cooperation between nations—the first and second polar years. He describes the organization responsible for the arrangements and shows that the scientific observations are of common interest to mankind. He describes the main branches of Geophysics, the physics of the Earth and its atmosphere, and how the study of the Earth naturally expands so as to include observations of cosmic rays and of the radiation and physics of the sun. In a booklet of this small size it would be unreasonable to expect much space to be devoted to South Africa's contribution to the I.G.Y., but a good deal of attention is devoted to the scientific exploration of the Antarctic, which concerns South Africa very closely.

An interesting description, well illustrated, is given of the artificial satellites and of the manner of their launching by means of multiple rockets. He discusses the use of rockets for exploration of the upper atmosphere and shows the value of observations of the sun's ultra-violet radiation and of solar flares. In short, the author describes the main activities of the I.G.Y. and discusses their importance. The booklet discusses these matters in such a way that, although scientifically sound, it is easily followed by the non-expert and should be of interest to every intelligent person.

W.S.