

## SPACE FACTS

Land animal that we are, with an itch to hold everything down to about six miles an hour, we print the following paragraphs for the benefit of those to whom the concept of space travel is a many-sided thing :

### 1. Political and probably philosophical

The director-general of Technical Development (Air) at the Ministry of Supply, a man named Jones, is reported in *The Times* (8/3/56) as follows :

"Of the 87 countries in the world some were called major Powers and some minor Powers, but in due course how insignificant they would all appear and how minor would their differences seem when viewed from the moon by a representative party of one individual from each of them.

"There are some who would delay the launching of satellites, space-ships, and so on, in the belief that man may get to know more than is good for him. But man already knows more than is good for mankind, and not until he knows still more will he be able to adopt what he knows to the benefit of mankind as a whole. Man-launched satellites will at least provide a new and universal interest ; they will be there for all to see and marvel at and they will be unique in that while in space they will cease to belong to the particular country of their origin."

### 2. Mechanical

On Saturday, March 10th, 1956, a Fairey Delta 2 aircraft, piloted by Mr. Peter Twiss reached a speed of over one thousand miles an hour. A record.

## "ETC."

Our friends Readers Union, in announcing the increased postal charges for books, make the following comment which we

think worth while passing on to members who care for plain words.

"Culture, alas, is too often a casualty in a democracy, which must please the masses or be dismissed. The latest attack on culture, and it is plainly a tax on knowledge, is the overnight doubling of the postage rate on books, though, in the true and typical tradition of watching the main chance, postage on newspapers, football pool coupons, and such like is specifically excluded from any increase. Britain has now the highest book postage rates in the world, and it is indeed time to think again when volumes of the classics are obliged to subsidize the 'Daily Gutter-snipe.' But we won't go on—and indeed how far can you expect to go with a man like Charles Hill, to whom books have obviously meant so little at any time that he can refer to them in a letter to us as 'books, etc.,'?"

