

Department of Scientific and Industrial Research : Activities in Scotland

THE view has been held by many that great benefits could accrue from the establishment of branches of the existing stations of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, or of new laboratories, in different parts of Great Britain. By such developments, the work of these stations could be brought more intimately before the notice of industrialists, practising engineers and others, and it would be more convenient for them to obtain the greatest benefit from the researches in progress by the most effective method—that of direct consultation and discussion with the staffs concerned. There is also the important argument that the research establishments themselves would be able more readily to appreciate the needs of industrial concerns and authorities in different places.

Accordingly, the announcement recently made concerning the establishment in Scotland of the new Mechanical Engineering Research Station and of substations for fuel, building and road research will receive wide approval. There is in Scotland, of course, a long and distinguished tradition of engineering activity of every description. In addition, there are schools of engineering science within its four universities and at various technical colleges. These schools have already established a high reputation for their teaching and for their original work; they are anxious to develop the research side of their function, and the closer contact afforded with the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research by the new developments will be helpful in this direction. Nor can it be denied that the Department itself will stand to gain from making its points of contact with all universities more numerous and more personal.

New Vegetable Research Station

THE first meeting of the governing body of the new Vegetable Research Station was held at the offices of the Ministry of Agriculture on October 8. Its incorporation as a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital was decided on and an organising committee was set up to select suitable candidates for the post of director and to examine suitable sites for the Station; it is considered that an area of at least 300 acres would be necessary. The members of the governing body are Sir Edward Salisbury, Dr. W. G. Ogg, Prof. G. E. Blackman, Dr. H. V. Taylor, Mr. R. L. Scarlett, Dr. J. Barker, Prof. J. W. Munro, Prof. R. H. Stoughton, Prof. F. T. Brooks, Prof. T. Wallace, Prof. S. J. Watson, Prof. W. Brown, Dr. C. D. Darlington, Mr. E. H. Gardener, Mr. G. G. Hole, Mr. W. F. Swift, Mr. J. Laity, Mr. A. A. Clucas, Mr. David Lowe, Mr. J. Cracknell, Mr. F. A. Secrett and Mr. G. W. Giles.

Agriculture in the Caribbean

THE Anglo-American Caribbean Commission was set up in 1942 to encourage social and economic co-operation between the United States of America and its possessions and bases in the Caribbean, and the United Kingdom and the British Colonies in the same area. In 1945, the Governments of France and the Netherlands accepted an invitation to join this body, which has since become known as the Caribbean Commission. The committee set up by its Research Council to deal with problems connected with agriculture, nutrition, fisheries and forestry has circulated a number of crop inquiries to the various agricultural departments and is issuing a series of publications

based on the replies. "Grain Crops in the Caribbean", the third in the series, is now available on request from the Caribbean Research Council, Caribbean Commission, Kent House, Port of Spain, Trinidad, B.W.I. For four hundred years the agricultural systems have been largely based on single-crop agriculture for the export market. The obvious dangers of this policy and the advantages of diverse cropping have been repeatedly pointed out, and the cessation of rice imports from Burma and India during the War forced attention on the necessity for producing more food for home consumption and the desirability of encouraging inter-Caribbean trade. With the exception of rice in the Guianas and maize in British Honduras and Jamaica, both acreage and production of grain crops are normally very small. Methods of cultivation are primitive, manures are rarely used and losses are heavy owing to inadequate storage facilities. The general conclusion from the inquiry, however, is that though greater attention to fundamental research is of the utmost importance, the introduction of machinery and the application of existing knowledge could immediately bring about a substantial increase in grain production without reducing the acreage devoted to export crops.

A Central Library of the World

A PROJECT for a Central Library of the World, drawn up during the German occupation of France, with the dual objects of providing more effectively for the preservation of the documents on which human culture rests and making their utilization easier and more widespread, is of interest in relation to the programme of work now contemplated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, which already includes a library organisation. Of the seven stages in which it was visualized the project would be achieved, the first, that of bringing together in France a limited number of initiators, both French and foreigners resident in France, had been realized; and a second, that of formulating a concrete project and inviting the collaboration of a number of well-known French personalities, was in progress when this pamphlet was issued by the French Association for the Study of Bibliographic Questions (7 rue des St.-Pères, Paris 7), as was the fourth stage of inviting foreign co-operation. The further stages include the formation of an international committee and, after study of the problem by that committee, an international convention to set up the appropriate organisation, appoint the members and to decide on the official language to be used.

The preliminary scheme summarized in this pamphlet contemplates the establishment of the organisation, to be called the *Bibliothèque Centrale du Monde*, by a statute guaranteeing the absolute inviolability of the headquarters of the Organisation, which is to be regarded as a world reserve; the territory where it is located should belong to no nation. The organisation would be directed by a supreme council, and administered by an administrative council. Its director would be provided with a general secretariat and would also be responsible for the administrative, principal and auxiliary services. Besides ordinary members of council, there would be from three to ten times as many corresponding members. The supreme council would function largely through two permanent commissions, one of which would be responsible for the study of projects. The chief services contemplated