SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF CHEMISTRY.

THE arrangements in connection with the seventh International Congress of Chemistry, which is to meet in London on May 27, are now practically completed. The series of meetings, which take place every third year, was originally started by a meeting of the Association of Sugar Chemists in Brussels. It was then extended to take in all branches of chemistry. Successive congresses have been held in Paris, Vienna, Paris again, Berlin, and Rome. With each successive meeting the popularity of the congress has increased, and it appears that this one will be not a whit behind those which have previously been held. There are seventeen sections and subsections, and a large number of contributions have been promised to each. The largest number of papers so far promised are for section ii., inorganic chemistry, and section x., electrochemical and physical chemistry. The growth of this latter section within the last few congresses is remarkable.

The amount of work and the number of papers to be got through in many of the sections will entail very careful organisation, and a very strong presidential hand to prevent prolixity. In section x. alone there are already about eighty papers promised, and the actual working time is eighteen and a half hours.

Beside the sectional work, there are to be four general lectures to the whole congress by Sir Boverton Redwood and by Profs. Haller, Paterno, and O. N. Witt. The first act of the congress will be a social one, when the Lord Mayor and Corporation will hold a reception at the Guildhall on Wednesday evening, May 26. On the next morning, at 10 o'clock, the joint organising committee will meet, and at 3 o'clock in the afternoon the inaugural meeting will take place at the Royal Albert Hall, when H.R.H. the Prince of Wales will formally open the congress. In the evening there will be a reception by the Foreign Office. On May 28 the various sections will start work in earnest, when they will be hard at it from 10 to 1.30; and at 2.30 Profs. Haller and Paterno will give their general lectures to the whole congress. In the evening there is to be a banquet at the Crystal Palace in the central transept. The Palace was taken because there is no other place in London sufficiently large to dine 2000 people, and it is hoped that at least this number will be present.

On Saturday morning the sections will meet from 10 to 2 o'clock, and in the afternoon there is to be a garden party at the Botanic Gardens, given by the ladies' committee. In the evening the hard-worked members of the congress will attend a reception given by the London section of the Society of Chemical Industry at the University of London. Sunday is to be devoted to private hospitality, as also is Monday evening. In this matter British hospitality is showing up well, as already the offers of private parties will absorb about 1500 members of the congress.

On Monday morning, May 31, the sectional meetings will take place from 10 to 1.30, and at 2.30 Prof. O. N. Witt will give a lecture to the whole congress, after which the sections will hold session from four to six.

The morning of Tuesday, June 1, is to be devoted to sectional work, and at 2.30 Sir Boverton Redwood will address the combined sections. Sectional meetings will then take place from 4 to 6. In the evening there is to be a reception at the Natural History Museum.

The official closing meeting of the congress is fixed for 10 o'clock on Wednesday, June 2, and in the afternoon the congress will visit Windsor Castle by permission of the King.

It should be mentioned that the annual meeting of the Society of Chemical Industry will commence on the morning of May 26; the presidential address will be delivered at 10.30, and a reception will be held at 4.30, so that those who are members of the Society of Chemical Industry and also of the International Congress will have a very severe week of work, both intellectual and social.

The meetings of the congress will be held in the buildings of the University of London at South Kensington, and at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, where the offices are located.

THE GOVERNMENT AND AERONAUTICAL RESEARCH.

MR. ASQUITH'S announcement that a special Government Department for Aërial Investigation is being formed will be read with the keenest satisfaction by everyone who is interested in scientific research. It is but a short time ago that the Aërial League was founded under the chairmanship of Colonel Massy, mainly with the object of stimulating national interest in the aërial problem. The evidence before us points to the belief that, whatever other causes may have been at work, Colonel Massy's movement has been to the forefront among them. Of this we have abundant proofs in the fact that about the middle of April proposals of the League were discussed by a committee of the War Office appointed by Mr. Haldane.

An important feature of the movement is the appointment of a scientific committee to organise continuous researches, experimental and otherwise, on problems connected with the design and construction of aërial machines. The National Physical Laboratory at Teddington is to be the centre for these researches, and the committee consists of Lord Rayleigh (president), Dr. Glazebrook (chairman), Major-General Sir Charles Hadden, and Captain R. H. S. Bacon, representing the Army and Navy, Sir A. G. Greenhill and Prof. J. E. Petavel, Dr. W. N. Shaw, and Messrs. Horace Darwin, Mallock, and Lanchester. The Prime Minister has stated that special and adequate funds have been placed at the disposal of the committee, the War Office, and the Admiralty for carrying out the programme.

Regarding the working of the committee, nothing definite has as yet been announced. It seems, however, understood that in addition to experimental work, one of their functions will be to advise the Admiralty and War Office on inventions which may be submitted to them or on processes which it may be in the interests of the country for the Government to acquire instead of allowing them to be divulged.

It is clear, both from the constitution of the committee and from the accounts given in the Press, that mathematical and physical investigations are to receive a large share of attention, and that the mere building of aëroplanes and experience in manipulating them are not to interfere with the less enticing and no less important work of finding out the fundamental principles underlying their construction. The problem of stability is specially singled out for mention. The mathematics of this problem is pretty complicated, and it is easy to remain for a long time within clear sight of final conclusions when there is still much ground to be covered before reaching them. But, given the necessary methods of calculation, experiments are still required to determine the data involved in obtaining numerical results. A mathematical investigation now in progress tends to show that broad aëroplanes may be less stable than might be inferred from ordinary