

so long. The whole difficulty is the very prosaic difficulty, I fear, of money and land. The South Kensington area, which now contains some of the most remarkable collections and some of the most valuable buildings in the world, has been very rapidly occupied. We cannot go south because of the Natural History Museum, and we are blocked on the north by the Imperial Institute, the Royal College of Science, and some of the other buildings, and I cannot at the moment see in what direction it will be possible for us to expand. The magnificent work which has been done in the direction of art on the other side of the road certainly sets the pace, and I recognise with you that it is pressingly necessary that we should have a new building for our great science collection at the earliest possible date. The question of funds is affected to some extent by the hint thrown out by Sir Henry Roscoe of assistance from the 1851 Commissioners. I cannot imagine any better work to which the Commissioners could devote their funds than in giving assistance in the construction of new buildings. For the moment I will say no more than that I will transmit to my colleagues and lay before the Cabinet, the Prime Minister, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer the very valuable statement which you made, and I will use my own personal influence, for whatever it may be worth, to impress on them the necessities of the case.

ESKDALEMUIR OBSERVATORY.¹

WE have received the annual report of the observatory department of the National Physical Laboratory for the year 1908, which is noteworthy as being the first report issued since the establishment of the new magnetic and meteorological observatory at Eskdalemuir. Readers of NATURE will be aware that the advent of electric tramways to the neighbourhood of the observatory at Kew has greatly interfered with magnetic work there. The new establishment in Dumfriesshire is far removed from all industrial undertakings, and will thus be free from disturbing effects due to artificial causes.

So far as Eskdalemuir is concerned, the past year has been one of installation and experiment, and the report contains no results of observations. The superintendent, Mr. G. W. Walker, went into residence on May 11, 1908, and was followed shortly after by his staff, comprising observer, computer, mechanic, and mechanic's assistant. The first instruments to be set up were the Elliot unifilar magnetometer and the Dover dip circle, which were given to the laboratory by Sir Arthur Rücker. They are the instruments which were used by the donor and Prof. Thorpe in their magnetic survey of the British Isles in 1890. The first absolute measurements of horizontal force, declination, and inclination were made on May 29, and were continued for eight weeks, when some changes became necessary. Observations, made three times a week, were resumed in October, and have since formed part of the routine work of the observatory. The final determination of the azimuth of the fixed mark awaits the completion of the arrangements for the time signal.

The recording apparatus consists of a set of Eschenhagen magnetographs and a set of Kew pattern magnetographs made for the observatory by Mr. P. Adie. The former belong to the Admiralty, and are those used at the *Discovery's* winter quarters in 1902-4. Owing to damp, the magnetic house could not be used immediately, and the instruments had to be accommodated elsewhere. The Eschenhagen recorders were set up temporarily in the seismograph room. The Adie instruments were accommodated in the general laboratory, but the warping of the wooden supports has made satisfactory compensation for temperature changes impossible, and the point will have to be taken up again when the instruments are removed to their permanent positions.

For seismological work a twin-boom Milne seismograph is in use. Regular records have been obtained since September 24. Provision has also been made for carrying on the work of a meteorological observatory or station of the first order. The photographic barograph and wet-

and dry-bulb thermograph have been lent by the Meteorological Office. They are the identical instruments which were formerly in use at Fort William Observatory, the base station of Ben Nevis. A Dines pressure-tube anemometer, a Beckley autographic rain-gauge, a Campbell-Stokes sunshine recorder, and barograph and thermograph of Richard pattern complete the outfit of ordinary meteorological instruments. Provision has, of course, been made for the usual control readings and for eye observations of weather phenomena. An Ångström compensation pyrheliometer has also been set up, and preparation has been made for recording the atmospheric electrical potential.

At Kew the usual observing and testing work has been continued. Summaries of the magnetic and meteorological work are given in the appendix. The results of measurements of solar radiation with an Ångström pyrheliometer, and of the temperature of the soil at depths of 1 foot and 4 feet, are given for the first time. The examination of the apparatus to be used at Eskdalemuir has formed an important part of the year's work, and we note also that Mr. W. Dubinsky, of the Pavlovsk Observatory, spent some time at Kew for the purpose of making comparisons between the Kew standard magnetometers and barometer and the standards in use in Russia. These comparisons were carried out in accordance with a general scheme for the international comparison of standards approved by the last International Meteorological Conference. The report concludes with the usual summaries of the magnetic results obtained at the observatories at Falmouth and Valencia.

THE IMPERIAL CANCER RESEARCH FUND.

THE annual meeting of the general committee of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund was held on July 9 at Marlborough House, when the Prince of Wales, the president of the organisation, took the chair.

The following are extracts from the report, which was adopted at the meeting:—

During the past year further correspondence took place with the authorities of the International Society for Cancer Research in Berlin, in which it has been suggested that the executive committee should re-consider the attitude hitherto adopted and join the International Society; and offering that the first International Congress should be held in London. The executive committee is of opinion that the decision arrived at is in the best interests of the scientific investigation of cancer, and accordingly it adhered to its position. At a subsequent date a petition was presented by the International Society for Cancer Research in Germany to the King, as patron of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, asking that the decision might be reviewed, but His Majesty, after considering the facts submitted to him through the Foreign Office, expressed the view that the Imperial Cancer Research Fund has cooperated freely in the past, both with German and other foreign workers, and will continue to do so in the future.

It may be well to recall in this connection the extent to which the Imperial Cancer Research Fund has encouraged the investigations of independent workers both at home and abroad. As is well known, the material for experimental research is difficult and costly to obtain, and is beyond the reach of many who, but for the help given from this fund, would be debarred from participation in this branch of the research. Recognising that such help must be of the first importance, it has been the aim of the general superintendent, Dr. E. F. Bashford, with the entire concurrence of the executive committee, to distribute to all applicants who possess the necessary credentials the material accumulated with much labour and expense.

A satisfactory feature of the past year has been the recognition of the work of the fund by foreign investigators, as is shown by the number of applicants for permission to work under the general superintendent. It has been found impossible to concede all the requests, but gentlemen from Italy, Bukarest, New York, and Munich have been accorded full liberty to pursue their researches in the laboratories supported from the fund, and every facility has been given them. Special arrangements have also been granted to other workers to pursue certain specific investigations, and to certain foreign medical men to study the methods during a short visit to this country.

¹ The National Physical Laboratory. Report of the Observatory Department, Richmond, Surrey, and of the Observatory, Eskdalemuir, Langholm, Dumfriesshire, for the Year 1908, with Appendices. Pp. 53. (Teddington, 1909.)