

in the minds of oil technologists in Great Britain, and no Government bill, reports of foreign enterprise, secret explorations in Derbyshire or elsewhere, animates us from resignation to facts which one-time emergency and progressive geological knowledge have taught.

OIL pools of commercial magnitude (*pace* natural gas, shale oil and allied indications and potentialities) cannot reasonably be anticipated in any known area in Great Britain. Many years of official geological survey—a centenary in 1935 in point of fact—together with much independent work, leave few spots unknown, if not in detail, at least in sufficient outline to preclude even faint hope. The Government measure is discreetly, if not satirically, worded: it refers to oil which *might* be discovered or *may* exist; it excludes Northern Ireland from the Bill, presumably on political grounds; in this, as with the rest of Great Britain, it has the silent approbation of British geology, though it is in the public interest that that silence should be officially broken if the present bill is in any way interpreted as supporting authoritative views that oil does indeed exist in Great Britain and only awaits public money for its development.

#### Royal Botanic Gardens, Regent's Park

WHEN the lease of the Royal Botanic Society, Regent's Park, terminated in 1931, the grounds were thrown open to the public, but arrangements were made with the Office of Works for continuing the investigations in genetics which had been carried on there since the War. This arrangement has now been placed on a permanent basis, a portion of the original Gardens, including a quadrangle of buildings and the adjacent grounds, having been set aside for this work on rental from the Office of Works. Through the action of Prof. R. Ruggles Gates, the Courtauld research fund of £5,000 has been obtained as an endowment for this work, which is an important extension of the research facilities of the Department of Botany, King's College. The facilities include two greenhouses with boilers for heating, a potting shed, tool house, cold frames and a laboratory of four rooms. The latter is being fitted up for the examination of genetical material and the collection and treatment of cytological material from plants grown in the Gardens, as well as for photographic work. The Empire Cotton Growing Corporation is also making a grant for three years in aid of further researches on cotton and its relatives. Various other temperate and tropical economic plants are being investigated. The fundamental researches in cytogenetics, with which the name of Prof. Gates has been connected for many years, have now been extended to include a study of the native species of *Oenothera* in eastern Canada. The phenomena of distribution, relationships and hybridisation of the native species and varieties (many of them undescribed) found in this area constitute a genetic survey which throws light on many phases of the complicated evolutionary problems in this genus.

#### Sir Charles Parsons Memorial

THE Sir Charles Parsons Memorial Executive Committee, composed of the presidents of thirteen scientific and technical societies, with the Engineer-in-Chief of the Fleet, and presided over by Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins, has just issued a statement of its aims and an appeal for subscriptions. Observing that the name of Parsons will ever be remembered with those of Newcomen, Watt, Trevithick and Stephenson, and that his fame was due not only to his work in marine and electrical engineering, but also to his investigations in various branches of physics, the statement says that it has been decided that the memorial shall take several forms. It is proposed, first, to place a memorial to him in Westminster Abbey; secondly, to found an annual lecture to be given by a distinguished man of any nationality, who will be chosen in turn by the various scientific and technical societies; and thirdly, it is proposed to arrange with the governors of London House that the library in that House shall be called the "Parsons Research Library". A bronze medal will be established in connexion with the annual lecture and a bust of Sir Charles Parsons will be placed in the library. London House was founded in 1931 as a hall of residence for Dominion and Colonial men students of white parentage, from the Empire overseas. The property, now under development, covers an area of about 1½ acres in the Bloomsbury district close to the University of London, and the proposed library will contain scientific and technical works. To carry out the whole scheme, it has been estimated that a sum of at least £12,000 is required. Copies of the appeal are being sent to members of the societies concerned, and the Executive Committee suggests that in general the maximum subscription should be two guineas. Donations should be sent to the Royal Society, Burlington House, W.1, and cheques made payable to the "Sir Charles Parsons Memorial Fund".

#### The New Hydrogen

IN the course of Lord Rutherford's Friday evening discourse on March 23 at the Royal Institution (see p. 481), experiments were shown to illustrate the differences in freezing point and in vapour pressure between ordinary and heavy water, and the differences in heat conductivity between ordinary and heavy hydrogen. For the first time, experiments were made to show the artificial transformation of lithium by protons and deuterons of energy corresponding to about 100,000 volts. The enormous emission of fast protons when ammonium sulphate containing heavy hydrogen was bombarded by deuterons was clearly shown by counting methods. The transformation apparatus was designed and operated by Dr. Oliphant, while Messrs. Watson and Sons (Electro-Medical) Ltd. loaned an installation to provide a steady potential of 100,000 volts to accelerate the ions.

#### Developments of Television

AN application of science has enabled a chairman of a company to become a historic figure. At the