News and Views

Centenary of the Geological Survey of Great Britain

THE Geological Survey of Great Britain is the oldest national geological survey in the world, having now been in active existence for a hundred years. It owes its inception to the private enterprise of the late Sir Henry Thomas De la Beche, who became its first director. Geological material was quickly accumulated and De la Beche was compelled to ask for museum accommodation. This was provided in a house in Craig's Court, Charing Cross, where it was opened to the public in 1841, as the Museum of Economic Geology. In 1851, the Museum was transferred to Jermyn Street, where it has continued until recently. For many years past, however, the space available has been inadequate, and it has been impossible to display to full advantage the very extensive collections of rocks, fossils and minerals in the possession of the Survey and Museum. In 1912, the Bell Committee recommended the transfer of the Museum and Survey to a site in South Kensington next to the Natural History Museum, but no action was taken until the Museums Commission met in 1927. The Government then agreed to the transfer, and the new building was completed by H.M. Office of Works in 1933. Occupation by the Geological Survey was, however, delayed by its utilisation as the meeting place of the World Economic Conference, 1933.

Opening of the New Museum of Practical Geology

IT is now announced that the new Museum of Practical Geology will be formally opened next July. Advantage has been taken of this to arrange a joint celebration of the centenary of the Geological Survey and the opening of the new Museum. In the new Museum at South Kensington ample accommodation has been provided to display the exhibits in a building specially designed to meet modern museum requirements. New material has been acquired from many sources and the extent and scope of the exhibits has been enlarged. For the past three or four years, geologists of the Survey and Museum have been mainly engaged in rearranging and bringing up to date the collections, their normal field work being subordinated to the needs of the Museum. At the back of the Museum new offices have been provided for the Geological Survey, together with modern laboratories for the prosecution of petrological and mineralogical research. Enlarged accommodation has been provided for the Library and collection of maps which, as in the past, will be available for consultation by the public. The Museum is to be opened by the Duke of York on July 3. On July 4 there will be a morning reception of delegates to the Centenary, followed by an address by the Director of the Survey on the history and functions of the Geological Survey of Great Britain. On the evening of July 4 there will be an evening reception by H.M. Government. Excursions to several of the classic areas of British geology follow immediately after the meetings. It is expected that a large and representative gathering of geologists from all parts of the world will be present for the celebration.

Dr. J. Chadwick, F.R.S.

DR. JAMES CHADWICK, fellow of Caius College, Cambridge, and assistant director of research in the Cavendish Laboratory, has been appointed to the Lyon Jones chair of physics in the University of Liverpool as from October 1 next, in succession to Prof. L. R. Wilberforce, who retires at the end of the present session. Dr. Chadwick is one of the most distinguished of the younger physicists in Great Britain. His early work on α-, β- and γ-radiation led to the experimental proof of Moseley's deduction that the charge on the nucleus was equal to the atomic number. Then, in association with Lord Rutherford, he carried out investigations on the anomalous scattering of α-particles by light elements, which gave information on the size and structure of the nucleus of the atom, while another line of work demonstrated the artificial transmutation of certain lighter elements by α-particle bombardment. Improvements in the technique of counting such particles led to the discovery of definite nuclear α-particle and proton levels. The obscure effects observed by M. and Mme. Curie-Joliot when beryllium was bombarded with α-particles were investigated by Dr. Chadwick, and immediately he recognised that they could be explained by assuming the ejection of a particle having mass but no charge. This assumption he quickly proved in a brilliant series of experiments, and a new elementary particle, the neutron, which has proved of wide importance in investigations on atomic structure, was made available to the physicist. The value and originality of Dr. Chadwick's work has been recognised by his election to a fellowship of the Royal Society, by the award of the Hughes Medal of the Society in 1932 and other distinctions.

Racial History of Britain

A LETTER to *The Times* of March 13 puts forward on behalf of the Royal Anthropological Institute proposals for a comprehensive survey of the racial history and physical constitution of the inhabitants of Britain—a matter in which action is long overdue. It is a remarkable fact, and one which was not generally appreciated until necessity arose during the War, that so little should be known of the physical characters of the British population as a whole. The racial character of the British peoples in prehistoric and early historic times, as preserved in skeletal remains in museums, has received attention from time to time, but piecemeal; and more or less extended investigations of the present population have been carried out in parts of Scotland, Wales, England and Ireland; but no organised attempt has been made to correlate this material or to extend it systematically. The proposals now put forward