

of considerably more than a thousand wells, the greater number of which are in operation and irrigate an area of a million and a half acres. The capital outlay on the system has been about Rs. 126 lakhs (£945,000). The execution of the "Grid" project has been in the hands of Sir William Stampe, formerly chief engineer of the Irrigation Department of the United Provinces.

#### Tring Museum

ABOUT the time of the recent meeting of the British Association in Nottingham, it was announced in the Press that the late Lord Rothschild had bequeathed the buildings and collections of his museum at Tring to the nation on condition that the trustees of the British Museum should undertake their custody and maintenance. The president of the Association, Sir Edward Poulton, expressed in his address the hope that this condition would be accepted, and the committee of Section D (Zoology) forwarded a resolution to the Council, recording its opinion "that the continuance of the Tring Museum as an active centre of scientific research is a matter of the utmost importance from a national, and indeed from an international, point of view. For many years", the resolution continues, "the collections preserved there, more particularly the vast and unequalled collection of Lepidoptera, have attracted research workers from all over the world and have been the means of adding largely to our understanding of the problems of geographical variation. The Sectional Committee earnestly desire that the permanent conservation of these collections and the continuance of the facilities for their study provided by the munificence of the late Lord Rothschild will be ensured by their being placed in the custody of the Trustees of the British Museum." The Council of the Association has now adopted this resolution.

#### Royal Institute of International Affairs

THE report of the Council of the Royal Institute of International Affairs submitted to the eighteenth annual general meeting on November 2 refers to the establishment of a chair of international economics at the Institute, Chatham House, London, S.W.1, as a result of a gift of £20,000 from Sir Henry Price. Prof. Allan G. B. Fisher, of the University of Western Australia, has been appointed as the first holder of this chair and will assume his duties in January 1938. It is hoped that this is the first of what will become a group of research chairs devoted to the study of international affairs, and the council contemplates the establishment of research chairs in British Commonwealth relations, international law and institutions and Far Eastern affairs as soon as provision can be made for them. In addition to these important developments, which were largely inspired by the work of Prof. Arnold Toynbee, holder of the Stevenson research chair in international history, the council has been able to maintain its programme of research by individual scholars and by study groups through the support of the trustees of the Rockefeller

Foundation, who in January 1937 renewed for a further five years their grant of £8,000 a year. Four reports in the Study Group Series were completed during the year, covering "The British Empire", "The Problem of International Investment", "The Colonial Problem" and "The Republics of South America: a Political, Economic and Cultural Survey". Particulars of these, and of other publications of the Institute, are included in an appendix. The Rockefeller Foundation has also made a special grant for an investigation of the refugee problem. The report includes particulars of a number of other research projects which are in progress as well as meetings held and study groups in being. It is expected that the African Research Survey will be completed and published early in 1938, the preliminary survey having been extended to cover administration, economics, scientific research and social relations.

#### Tyneside Geographical Society

THE Tyneside Geographical Society celebrated its fiftieth year of existence at Newcastle-upon-Tyne on November 4-6. On November 4 a jubilee meeting was held with the president of the Society, the Duke of Northumberland, in the chair. The chief speaker at this meeting was Sir William Goodenough, who was one of the two representatives of the Royal Geographical Society at the celebrations. After this meeting, a dinner was held at the Royal Station Hotel, when Lord Polwarth, president of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, proposed the health of the Tyneside Geographical Society. Sir Thomas Oliver acknowledged the toast and included in his response references to the past activities of the Society over the last fifty years. The health of the guests was proposed by Mr. Herbert Shaw, who held the office of secretary of the Society for nearly forty years. He expressed the gratitude of the Society to the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, the Geographical Association and the Manchester Geographical Society for sending representatives to the celebrations. The toast was acknowledged by Lord Eustace Percy, rector of King's College, and by Prof. E. G. R. Taylor of Birkbeck College, University of London. On November 5 the Herbertson Memorial Lecture of the Geographical Association was delivered in King's College by Prof. A. G. Ogilvie, of the University of Edinburgh. The subject of the lecture was "Minerals, Land Forms and Life". On November 6 an exhibition of geographical materials, publications and appliances was held, the official opening ceremony being performed by Lord Eustace Percy.

#### County Library at Ruislip

THAT a timbered barn, reputed to be of medieval age, used in olden days for the storage of corn and later for haybinders' work and general farm products, might be saved by its own appeal through adaptation for the needs of a public county library is a consideration which might well enter the minds of educational authorities in those rapidly expanding rural areas where sites are valued at exorbitant rates

of purchase. On November 2, Prof. J. H. Clapham, vice-provost of King's College, Cambridge, performed the ceremony of opening at Ruislip, Middlesex, the "Little Barn" (so called for generations) appertaining to the ancient Manor of Ruislip, and now being used as a county library. The homestead of the farm, it should be said, originally constituted, with the acres around, but a fraction indeed of the extensive tracts owned formerly at Ruislip by King's College, Cambridge, the gift of its founder, Henry VI. Not long ago, the College conveyed the farm and surroundings to the people of Ruislip as a gift. Hence the presence of Prof. Clapham was specially opportune and relevant to the occasion. The requisite funds for the adaptation and library furnishing equipment of the barn for its new purposes were provided by the Middlesex County Council, supported by the unwearied efforts of the Middlesex Education Committee. It is of interest to record that Mr. T. E. James, formerly clerk to the Royal Society, who lives at Ruislip, has been appointed by the Middlesex County Council as a representative on the Ruislip-Northwood Local Library Committee.

#### Oils from Irish Grown Plants

CORK UNIVERSITY PRESS has issued an Agricultural Bulletin, No. 4, with this title. It contains the record of some small-scale experiments, carried out at Cork and elsewhere in the Irish Free State, on the possibility of producing supplies of oil seeds upon Irish soils. Crops of hemp, linseed, poppy, sunflower, rape, mustard and *Mercurialis annua* have been raised with varying success, and the yield of oils determined, as also the main physical chemical characteristics of the extracted oils. The work has been under the direction of Prof. J. Reilly and Mr. Denis F. Kelly, of the Department of Chemistry, University College, Cork. Very indifferent success was met with in these preliminary trials with the annual sunflower and *Mercurialis*, and the authors seem most impressed with the possibilities of native-grown poppy seed oil displacing cotton seed oil in the edible fat and soap industries in Ireland. These trials are, however, of a very preliminary nature; they throw very little light upon the possibility or otherwise of large-scale cultivation of these crops under Irish conditions, but they do establish the yields and main characteristics of the oils to be expected from such oil seeds grown under such conditions.

#### Horticultural Research in Australia

THE opening in September of a new laboratory under the Commonwealth Council for Scientific and Industrial Research at Merbein, Victoria, is an indication of the store now set by viticulturists on the provision of scientific services for their guidance. Merbein is in the Mildura district on the River Murray, where the first irrigation settlements were established some fifty years ago. Marked changes have taken place of late in horticultural practices in these areas, following particularly upon studies of soils with consequent modification of quantity and frequency of watering, and upon introduction

of communal drainage schemes. The former danger of ruin of blocks by 'salting', or bringing sodium sulphate and chloride and other salts to the surface by excessive watering and insufficient drainage, is almost a thing of the past. The Council is now preparing plans for a further new laboratory at its citricultural research station at Griffith, N.S.W., in an area watered from the Burrinjuck Dam on the Murrumbidgee River.

#### National Institute of Agricultural Botany

ON the occasion of the annual general meeting of fellows of the National Institute of Agricultural Botany at Cambridge, the chairman of the council, Captain D. M. Wills, directed attention to the value of the Institute's system of substations. By means of this organization the Institute is able to make recommendations to farmers which are applicable to all districts (with two exceptions) south of a line drawn between Lancaster and Scarborough. There are at present two defective links in the Institute's chain of substations—the Fens and Wales—and the Institute hopes that these defects will shortly be remedied. At present there are substations at Sprowston, Norfolk; Long Sutton, Hants; Cannington, Somerset; Newport, Shropshire; and Askham Bryan, Yorks; on soils ranging from blowing sand to heavy clay. In every case these substations are attached to an agricultural college, institute or station, and the trials are carried out under the supervision of a crop recorder who is responsible to the N.I.A.B. Although the primary purpose of a substation is the provision of trials upon which recommendations can be based, Captain Wills stressed the importance of another aspect of their work. It is possible for a farmer to visit any of these to see, under conditions which may be very similar to his own, trials of the latest introductions of plant breeders both at home and abroad, growing side by side with established varieties. This should enable him to form an opinion as to the suitability—or otherwise—of new varieties to his particular conditions. Finally, Captain Wills expressed the hope that the establishment of a substation in Wales would lead to the discovery of varieties particularly suited to the poorer soils, both in England and Wales.

#### Mass Observations of Social Problems

"MASS-OBSERVATION" by C. Madge and T. Harrison, with a foreword by Dr. Julian Huxley, the first of a series of projected pamphlets, outlines the technique of a study of social environment and its effects on lines comparable with much bird-watching and observation of natural history, since, largely because of its empiricism, it has, like them, room for the untrained amateur as well as for the trained man of science (London: Frederick Muller, Ltd., 1937. 1s. net). The three sciences most immediately relevant to mass-observation are psychology, anthropology and sociology, and a fundamental plan for research will be evolved by the central organization as a result of suggestions from observers and scientific experts. In the first place, it is intended to mobilize