

of Geology. The special task of the Department of Geography is to promote the study of regional and human geography. Hence, the main feature of the design and equipment of the new department is the emphasis placed on maps and on facilities for their study. The Map Laboratory is a spacious room, with natural lighting on three sides, and artificial lighting provided both by ceiling and by adjustable drawing-bench lamps. Adjoining the laboratory is the map store, where the 3,000 maps which form the existing collection of the Department are conveniently housed. A large lecture room, with epidiascope, a smaller classroom, and a small research room with mapping frames, are all on one floor. The private rooms of the staff and the library are on lower floors. The removal of the Departments of Botany and Geology to the parts of the Foster Court territory which have been allocated to them is still a task of the future.

#### Pontifical Academy of Sciences

THE first annual report of the reconstituted Pontifical Academy (*Annuario della Pontificia Accademia delle Scienze*, 1; 1936-37) has been received. The origin of this Academy, in common with that of the Royal National Academy of the Lincei, can be traced back to the foundation in 1603 by Federico Cesi of the ancient *Accademia dei Lincei*. Founded in Rome with the object of uniting together those interested in the study of the sciences, the Academy adopted the title "of the lynxes" from the supposed sharp-sightedness of those animals. Many of the most famous men of science of the period became members, amongst them Galileo, who received much support from the Academy. Soon after the death of Cesi in 1630, the activities and influence of the Academy declined, but several attempts at revival were made during the next hundred and fifty years. These efforts had no lasting success, however, until about 1800, when there was a greatly increased activity due mainly to the exertions of Abbot Scarpellini, encouraged by Papal support. Shortly after Scarpellini's death the Academy came under the direct control of the Pontiff, and in 1847 received from Pius IX the title of *Pontificia Accademia dei Nuovi Lincei*.

WITH the capture of Rome in 1870, the new Italian State took over the major part of the Academy's activities, including its library, and formed the *Reale Accademia dei Lincei*. The Pontifical Academy continued to exist as a separate body, but with greatly decreased influence. In 1936, Pius XI decided to restore the importance of the Academy and reconstituted it under its present title. The Papal Academy of Sciences now consists of seventy academicians, chosen from among the most distinguished men of science, irrespective of nationality and of religious profession. Actually thirty-six of the members are non-Italian and are representative of thirteen nationalities. The British members are Sir Charles Sherrington and Prof. E. T. Whittaker; the late Lord Rutherford was also a member. The Annual,

which extends to more than 800 pages, contains a brief survey of the Academy's history, a description of its headquarters, the Villa Pia, in the Vatican, and biographical notes and portraits of each of its seventy members.

#### Agricultural Education

BOTH the need and the difficulty of instructing the farmer in the practical results of scientific research are well appreciated by many agricultural authorities, but few seem to have been so enterprising as the Bacon Development Board, which has sent to us some specimens of its recent publications. The Board has realized that it is at least as important to 'put over' new information to those concerned with advising and educating the farmer as to approach him directly. The agricultural county organizer, like many other expert technical men, is far too busy to read all the original literature, to select from it and make the necessary summaries, and it must therefore be a great boon to him to receive ready-made such summaries and abstracts as are now provided by the research department of the Bacon Development Board. These abstracts, which are issued yearly by the Board in the form of a report, are exceedingly well done: clear, concise and well selected. There are only about one hundred of them, but they are all to the point and make attractive reading, even to the non-expert. Included in the volume (Report No. 7, Selected Abstracts on Pig Production, Bacon Development Board, Sept., 1937, price 2s. 6d. post paid) are a thumbnail summary of recent developments, a classified table of contents, and lists of the publications of the Board and of the journals from which the abstracts have been made. Reprints of two outstandingly important scientific papers on pig production have been circulated, as well as brochures on round-worm (*Ascaris lumbricoides*) and the ineconomy of feeding too much protein to pigs. These brochures are not written to 'boost' any product or to subserve any private gain, and therefore they are far more likely to hit the mark than the propaganda efforts of commercial undertakings.

#### The Norman Lockyer Observatory

IN presenting the annual report and accounts (1936-37) of the Norman Lockyer Observatory, the council thanks the new director (Mr. D. I. Edwards) and his small staff for the work carried out under the difficult conditions consequent upon the death of the late director, Dr. W. J. S. Lockyer. Reference is made to the new sensitometer recently added to the equipment of the Observatory, which will make possible the development of quantitative work at Sidmouth over a wide range of the spectrum. Through the generosity of Sir Robert Mond, Prof. F. I. Blumbach is working at the Observatory as a research associate. The council expresses its view that the best tribute that could be paid to Dr. Lockyer's devoted services would be in the development of the Observatory, which retains so many marks of his attention, care and vision.