News and Views

Science at the Empire Exhibition, Glasgow

THE Empire Exhibition, which opens next month at Glasgow, will be the largest and most representative exhibition, with the exception of Wembley, that has been held in the history of the British Commonwealth. The Exhibition will present an impressive representation of the industrial and manufacturing capacity of the Empire and will show the progress of civilization within the Empire in many of its different aspects. Both in the industrial exhibits and in those for which the Government is directly responsible, research will occupy a prominent position. The theme of research will be symbolized in the huge sculptured feature, more than 40 ft. in height, which occupies the lofty entrance court of the United Kingdom Pavilion. Above the 'original elements', earth, water and air, represented by a golden sphere about which water continuously plays, a figure typifying man's questing spirit is seen to ride on a great silver wave. This figure bears the symbols of energy which science has placed within the grasp of man. The first of the four exhibition halls, each covering an area of 5,000 square feet, which form the United Kingdom Pavilion, is being devoted to a 'Fitter Britain' exhibit organized by the Ministry of Health in co-operation with the Board of Education, the Scottish Department of Health and the National Fitness Council. This exhibit will illustrate in a striking and interesting manner how the application of scientific knowledge is leading to a healthier nation.

EXHIBITS in the other three halls in the Pavilion have been organized by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. The aim of these halls is to demonstrate the part played by scientific knowledge and research in the industrial life of the nation. The three great national industries, coal, iron and steel, and shipbuilding, have been selected to illustrate this theme, and one hall is devoted to each of these subjects. In planning the exhibits the Department has had the fullest co-operation from industry. Important industrial organizations, such as the Mining Association of Great Britain, the Gas Federation, the Iron and Steel Federation and the Shipbuilding Conference, besides scores of leading firms, have freely given their assistance. Elsewhere in the Exhibition, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Forestry Commission, in co-operation with the Scottish Department of Agriculture and the Scottish Fishery Board, are showing exhibits illustrating some of the benefits which modern research has brought to agriculture, fishing and forestry. In the agricultural section, dairying, animal nutrition, fruit growing, land crop improvement and animal diseases are dealt with. One interesting section will deal with the gas storage of fruit developed by the Food Investigation Board, and another shows the application of chemistry to the problem of keeping soil fertile. In the forestry section the Forest Products Research Laboratory is co-operating with the Forestry Commission in staging an exhibit illustrating the work of the Laboratory as applied to home-grown timber. Another application of industrial research will be shown in an exhibit in the Palace of Engineering arranged by the Home Office, which will demonstrate modern methods of promoting the safety, health and welfare of industrial workers.

Press and the Public

THE broadsheet on "The Press and the Public" which has recently been issued by P E P (Political and Economic Planning) is of special interest in view of the recent attacks made upon the freedom of the Press in Great Britain by certain foreign powers, and of the Prime Minister's spirited championship of the Press in his speech at the annual dinner of the Parliamentary Press Gallery. The present broadsheet is concerned with the social influences of the Press, and its admirable exposition of the intricacy of the relationship with the public, and of the functions, amounting essentially to the provision of a daily magazine, which a newspaper is expected by many of its readers to fulfil, shows clearly how unfair is much of the criticism of the Press for sensationalism and inaccuracy. In its presentation and selection of material the Press is largely limited by the educational standards of its readers, and the broadsheet suggests that for one important class of readers all four of the popular dailies represent an improvement in taste and information. Equally it is emphasized that large numbers of readers would apparently support a newspaper considerably more sensational, more scandalous and more irresponsible than anything which the scruples of journalists, advertisers and proprietors and the restraints of the law will allow to appear.

THE basic function of the Press is to provide its readers with trustworthy news on which they can, if necessary, form sound opinions on current events, and in referring to the question of the standard of accuracy outside of the political field, the broadsheet points out that criticisms of accuracy in regard to scientific matters are criticisms not only of the Press but also of organized science itself. In scientific matters the giving of extra time to working up the statement properly would often prevent false or misleading impressions being conveyed. Though many scientific workers will have experience of inaccuracies even when a very careful statement was supplied to the Press, it should not be forgotten that organized science has as yet evolved no adequate means in Great Britain of telling the Press in advance what scientific workers have to say when the time comes for announcements of progress to be made. The broadsheet suggests that the influence of the Press may best be estimated by considering it as the