

Farming in the U.S.S.R.

FARMING in Soviet Russia is the title of a recent interesting article by Sir John Russell (*J. Min. Agric.*, 44, 1063). The natural conditions of this vast territory vary from arctic to sub-tropical, and the agricultural products are in consequence correspondingly wide, ranging from rye, flax and potatoes in the north, through wheat, sunflower and sugar beet in the temperate zones, to oranges and tea in the sub-tropical regions. The preponderance of grain cultivation and the small production of animal products is the chief general feature of Russian agriculture, a characteristic shared by other non-tropical continental regions such as Canada, but the distinguishing mark of the Russian system is that it is planned by a central authority, and the production of certain quantities of the various products are allocated in turn to the constituent republics, regions and collective farms by their appropriate managements. There are two types of farm, namely, the State and the collective farm. The former are managed by State officials, and the employees receive a definite wage in money. The collective farm, on the other hand, is a new departure in agricultural organization. The entire land, live stock and implements are pooled and the whole is worked as a single unit under a committee of management. Workers are allotted certain duties and their achievement is reckoned in terms of 'labour days', a standard day's labour of ploughing or milking, for example, being assessed by the committee. After the Government's claim on the produce has been fulfilled, the remainder is divided between the workers on a basis of their 'labour days', that is, their wages are in kind only. Some 98 per cent of the sown area is now in collective farms, and the peasants appear more contented than previously, so quite apart from political and social issues, the progress of this new system will be closely followed by all interested in agriculture.

Fuels for Heating and Hot-water Supply

MR. H. L. PIRIE, in a paper presented at a joint meeting of the Institute of Fuel and the Institute of Heating and Ventilating Engineers on December 1, discussed the suitability of British coal and its derivatives for heating and hot-water supply. Selection of fuel must be dependent entirely on the purpose in view, available supplies and apparatus. Gas and electricity may be regarded as coal derivatives and present certain advantages over both coal and coke for specific requirements. Nevertheless, fuel and appliances must be considered together if efficient performance is expected. Open fires, continuously burning stoves, hot-water boilers, central heating boilers and steam boilers all require special types of fuel. Mr. I. Lubbock, at the same meeting, assessed the advantages of fuel oil for heating and hot-water supply. Summarily these are: comparatively small space occupied by plant and fuel, rapid and easy filling of storage tanks, which, by suitable piping may serve two or more widely separated boiler houses, cleanliness, lack of smoke, flexibility of supply to meet the needs of varying atmospheric conditions, elimination of standby losses, automatic control, and

thermal efficiency. Admittedly, gas and electricity may possess in many cases similar advantages, but they should all be taken into account in fuel selection. Fuel oil is moreover suitable for widely different types of installation. For example, it is now extensively used in office buildings, cinemas and theatres, churches, factories, hotels, trains, garages, flats, and houses, and the types of boiler which it is possible to install in these places are of necessity highly divergent. It is not claimed that fuel oil is better in every case than any other fuel, but it is claimed that oil as a fuel for central heating and hot water should be considered on its own merits in relation to other fuels.

Archæology in the University of London

CHANGES of no little importance for archæological studies are announced in the examination arrangements of the University of London. In and after 1939 no examination for the degree of B.A. in honours in archæology will be held; but archæological subjects will be added as optional or special subjects in the B.A. honours examination in classics, Greek, Latin, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Indo-Aryan, Persian and history. Further, the subject of "Prehistory of Western Europe" is added to the list of subjects which may be taken at the B.A. (General) examination. In view of the very marked progress and development in method of prehistoric studies relating to western Europe in recent years the inclusion of this subject in the general arts curriculum is especially noteworthy, marking an advance in status among academic studies. Similarly at Oxford, by a decree of Congregation, geography and anthropology jointly have been elevated to the dignity of a 'faculty'.

University of London: Progress since 1900

IN his report on the work of the University during the year 1937-38, Dr. H. L. Eason, the recently appointed principal, briefly reviews the progress that it has made since it became a teaching university in 1900 (University of London. Report of the Principal on the Work of the University during the Year 1937-38. Pp. 13. London: University of London). The number of candidates for examination increased sevenfold to 46,000, their fees tenfold to £188,000, the expenditure of the University, exclusive of grants dispensed to schools, institutions and departmental institutes, tenfold to £247,000. There are now in the schools and institutions of the University 240 professors, 160 readers and 945 recognized teachers; the roll of internal students reading for degrees and diplomas comprises 13,730 names, whilst the registered external students number 10,771. Of the 4,863 candidates for degrees in 1937, 3,074 were internal and 1,789 external. The principal recalls words used by Lord Haldane in 1920: "It ought to be the chief centre of learning in the entire Empire, . . . Here ought to be concentrated the highest talent, the highest level in that passion for excellence of which I have spoken, the highest atmosphere, such as only can come in a great capital at the heart of a great country." More and more, says the Principal, does the University approach this ideal. Among the