causes for concern is the agreement, completed last year, between Britain, the Netherlands and West Germany, which marked the start of a collaborative development programme, adding to the work already in progress in the United States, the USSR and other countries.

Dr Colin Sweet, of the J. D. Bernal Library, spoke for all the participants when he said that the primary objective of this project seemed to be economic gain from sales of gas centrifuges. All agreed that before this comes about there must be stringent safeguards which, said Dr A. McKnight of Sussex University, must be of a far higher standard than normal commercial practice. The danger that enriched uranium could be stolen and used to make weapons in secret must be avoided. Dr McKnight was concerned, however, that so far there has been insufficient emphasis on safeguards in the planning of centrifuge plants. Sir Michael Wright of the United Nations Association, a seasoned negotiator on matters of disarmament, pointed out the difficulty of getting agreement on safeguards with the countries of eastern Europe, although he thought it should be possible.

International controls were called for, and Dr Frank Barnaby, a journalist specializing in military technology, suggested that the International Atomic Energy Agency should become a supplier of enriched uranium. He thought the agency could be expanded to become responsible for the installation and operation of all imported nuclear facilities. This and the other fruits of the day's deliberations should be available for all to see when they are published. There seem to be no plans to make the views expressed any more widely heard.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS

100 Years in London

THE Institution of Electrical Engineers celebrates its centenary next week with three days of talk and festivity, as befits the largest learned society in Britain. The celebrations begin on Monday with a service of thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey to be followed by the opening ceremony at the Royal Festival Hall. The professional needs of the occasion will be served by a congress on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The institution can look back on a century of success, both in terms of growth and influence. The membership now amounts to more than 63,000, both in Britain and abroad, and thus dwarfs comparable organizations such as the Institute of Physics (15,000) and the Chemical Society (16,500). The institution is also well-heeled. Its annual report, to be published later this month, will show that the income for the year ended December 31, 1970, was £1,462,360 for an expenditure of only £1,231,510—an excess of nearly a quarter of a million pounds. This income is derived from five chief sources—an extensive list of successful publications, membership fees (£6.30 annually), rents and conference fees and the proceeds of INSPEC, the institution's information service.

The institution owns its own building in Savoy Place, but this can no longer house all of its activities; the publishing department has been banished to Stevenage, and most of the INSPEC staff are at Hitchin.

Through its widespread membership, the institution maintains strong contacts with industry, but, perhaps surprisingly, it seems that industrial finance plays little part in the institution's success. Nevertheless the benefits to be gained from cooperative interchange must be great. Next week may be an occasion for the institution to look back on the past with satisfaction, but it is also a time for looking to the future. And the title of the first lecture in the congress, to be given by Sir Brian Flowers, chairman of the Science Research Council, is "The Scientific Basis of Electrical Engineering in A.D. 2000".

SOCIETIES

Shortage of Homes

WITH the proceeds of its highly successful appeal, the Linnean Society has given its headquarters a new look, 111 years after moving into Burlington House in London. What it seems to need in the future are some new policies to keep it alive now that the naturalists who used to fill its ranks have largely given way to specialist biologists who are not inclined to join a society still devoted to evolution and classification.

Since the appeal for redevelopment was launched in 1969, almost £77,000 has been raised. The most important item of redevelopment has been the strongroom to hold the collections and library of the eighteenth century Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus. These were acquired by J. E. Smith, a rich amateur naturalist, in 1783, five years before the founding of the society, which has held the collection since Smith's death.

The redevelopment has also included the expansion of the library, the provision of offices for the executive secretary and a council room, as well as redecoration throughout. But more needs to be done, especially to improve the facilities for book storage, and another appeal has been launched to raise £2,500 to match a similar sum from the Bentham-Moxon Trust. Another much needed improvement, which is expected to be paid for by £6,000 from the Pilgrim Trust, is the reclassification of the library. The society has an important collection of historical volumes as well as an up to date library, but has at present only a catalogue of authors.

Remarkable as all this may seem in a climate of financial restriction, the society is suffering as much as other learned societies. Although the rooms in Burlington House are provided rent free by the government, the cost of upkeep is a heavy burden and the society is not attracting the new members that it desperately needs. Today there are 1,100 members, which is a poor improvement on the mid-nineteenth century when there were already more than 800.

The Linnean Society is at least in a happier position than many learned societies which either have no accommodation or are about to lose it. The greatest need of a society, however small, is for centrally located office space and a committee room where policies can be formulated. The Linnean Society has for many years helped to alleviate this need by making its rooms available to the Malacological and Royal Microscopical Societies and several others. The Institute of Biology, which is rapidly outgrowing its headquarters, provides secretarial staff for fifteen of its member societies, and has a small meeting room which holds 100 people. Few biological societies are as well endowed as the Biochemical Society, which has its own premises in London.

The Society for General Microbiology has bought a house in Reading, much cheaper than equivalent accommodation in London, and as near to the capital as the society wishes. The house provides offices and room for small meetings, but council meetings are still held in London, at the Ciba Foundation.

Other societies regard the idea of moving out of London as a last resort. The Royal Statistical Society, for example, has accommodation in London, but the lease will soon expire. The society is anxious to stay in London, which is so convenient for council meetings and for its library. Considerations of this sort have prompted this and several other scientific societies to show an interest in a six year old scheme to build offices and meeting rooms on a site near Regent's Park. London International Centre Ltd has outline planning permission from Camden Borough Council, which requires the provision of student accommodation together with the office buildings. The difficulty of raising the