The Italian government has decided to devote special attention to the establishment of industrial experimental stations and the encouragement of technical education. Besides studying new processes and making new applications of old methods, these stations will supply industries with a trained personnel. Five such stations have already been established—two at Milan, for paper and fats respectively; two at Naples, for leather and ceramics; and one at Reggio Calabria, for essential oils and perfumes. It is planned to establish three new stations: one at Rovigno, for the sugar industry; another at Milan, for the development of the refrigerator industry; and a third, probably at Rome, to study the distillation of gases and their by-products and, in general, all processes of combustion. Other stations are under consideration. Laboratory schools are being organized at Turin, Milan, Genoa, Florence, Rome, Naples and Palermo. Provision is also being made for ordinary schools of industry, of which 150 will be royal schools and 400 others subsidized.

The establishment of a national system for encouraging scientific and industrial research in Belgium has been provisionally approved by the minister, but details have not yet been published.

An Institute of Physical and Chemical Research was established in Japan in 1917 with government support of £200,000 over a period of ten years, while a gift of £100,000 has been received from the emperor. The balance of the £800,000, which is required is being collected from private sources. The institution is apparently intended to serve three purposes: (*a*) the prosecution of fundamental researches; (*b*) the conduct of industrial investigations on lines similar to those of the Mellon Institute; and (*c*) the training of research workers who will be elected from among university graduates to research scholarships. Until the laboratories of the institute can be built in Tokyo accommodation is being provided by the universities of Tokyo, Kyoto and Sendai. It is understood further that another Imperial Ordinance has been issued announcing the establishment of a new Bureau in the Department of Agriculture and Commerce for the purposes of industrial experiment. This bureau will control work in connection with experiments, analysis, appraisal and instruction. There will be two experimental stations; one in the Tokyo district and one in the Osaka district.

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

AERONAUTIC SECTION OF THE AMEERICAN SOCIETY OF ENGINEERS

IN the field of aviation a good deal of cooperative engineering work has been done, standards have been established, details of construction perfected, interchangeability secured. Nevertheless there still exists the real opportunity for promoting in a large way the broad engineering development having to do with the future of aerial navigation regarded as an essentially international science, art and business. To this end the members of The American Society of Mechanical Engineers interested in aeronautics have organized themselves into a professional section of this subject.

Howard E. Coffin, Jesse G. Vincent, Orville Wright, C. F. Kettering, Elmer A. Sperry, James Hartness, John R. Cautley, Lionel S. Marks, Miller R. Hutchison, Charles E. Lucke and Joseph A. Steinmetz, all prominent in the aeronautic field in the war, are among those who have registered in the section.

As chairman of the advisory committee on aeronautics under the Council of National Defense, Mr. Coffin sent the first American delegation to the London Conference on Aircraft in the spring of 1918. In the full realization of the possibilities of future commercial as well as military and naval development, the Peace Conference created a commission for drafting an International Aircraft Convention. Benedict Crowell, assistant secretary of war, and as chairman of the American Aviation Mission visiting Europe in 1919, urged the adoption of a definite engineering basis to secure the future of air navigation and to guide bodies entrusted with the formulation of laws. Herbert Hoover, in his recent address before the American Institute

of Mining Engineers, stressed the limitations of individual initiative and development, and the crying need for definite, comprehensive programs for the solution of our great engineering problems. These things have influenced the A. S. M. E. to take the step of organizing this section with the hope that, through cooperation with all the agencies interested in and working in this field, general good will be brought to the whole industry.

COMMITTEE ON PROBLEMS OF ELECTRICAL INSULATION

The National Research Council has planned an investigation of the principles of insulation, a matter which is of vital importance to the electrical trade and to its consumers. A meeting of the council's insulation committee was held recently at the laboratories of the Western Electric Company at 463 West Street, New York City. It was attended by a number of engineers and physicists, the chief engineer of the Western Electric Company, Dr. F. B. Jewett, who is chairman of the committee, presiding.

A preliminary meeting of the committee was held a year ago, but at that time no definite plans were formulated. At this meeting it was decided that the first step is the gathering together of all the published and known scientific material relating to insulation. This is a large undertaking and the committee decided that a permanent salaried secretary should be engaged to carry on the compilation of the material which has already been published and to maintain continuity in the records and activities of the committee. The committee also decided that it would attack the technical problems by providing some research men in the universities with funds and materials supplied by the industries under the guidance of the National Research Council. The scarcity of skilled and trained research men, who are capable of attacking insulation problems is a matter of much concern to the insulation committee. An effort will be made to discover among the post-graduate students and the faculties of the universities men who are able to do this work.

The committee consists of thirty-seven representatives from the electrical industries, the national engineering societies, the national scientific societies, the national manufacturing organizations and the universities and colleges of the country. Among those who attended the meeting were: Mr. C. E. Skinner, Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Co., Dr. Irving Langmuir, General Electric Co., Mr. Percy H. Thomas, Consulting Electrical Engineer, New York, Mr. William A. Del Mar, New York, D. W. Roper, Commonwealth Edison Co., Chicago, Ill., Dr. Clayton H. Sharp, Electrical Testing Laboratories, New York, Professor John Johnston, Yale University, Professor Frederick Bedell, Cornell University, Professor A. E. Kennelly, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Professor K. T. Compton, Princeton University, Edward D. Adams, Engineering Foundation, New York, Dr. Carl Hering, consulting engineer, Philadelphia, Pa., John M. Weiss, The Barrett Company, New York, Dr. Richard C. Tolman, Chemical Division, National Research Council, Washington, D. C., and Dr. F. B. Silsbee, Bureau of Standards, Washington, D. C.

THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Director James Henry Breasted, of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, who recently returned from an archeological survey of the Near East, reports that the remarkable collections which the expedition was able to purchase have arrived at the Haskell Oriental Museum and are now unpacked preparatory to their public exhibition.

Among these is a complete group of twenty-five painted limestone mortuary statuettes from Egypt, representing the deceased and the members of his family engaged in all sorts of household activities. They date from the Old Kingdom (3,000 to 2,500 B.C.) and form the most extensive group of such figures ever discovered in one tomb. In addition to a group of royal seal cylinders and a group of some