

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE BRITISH NATIONAL UNION OF
SCIENTIFIC WORKERS

THE annual meeting of the council of the National Union of Scientific Workers was held at King's College on November 13. We learn from *Nature* that in his address Dr. J. W. Evans, the retiring president, dealt with the subject of "Research at the Universities." Dr. Evans paid a tribute to the achievements of scientific workers during the war, and pointed out that the task ahead of them was of even greater consequence and allowed of no relaxation of effort. After summarizing the activities of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, he expressed dissatisfaction with the present attitude of this department towards the scientific and technical faculties of the universities. He considered that a teaching staff engaged in research work, both in pure science and in its applications to industry, was in a more favorable position to discover and develop new principles than research workers isolated and restricted in the laboratories of research associations of even government research institutions. In conclusion, Dr. Evans urged the importance of universities including in any course in science some training in research methods. This he embodied in a resolution which was supported by Professor Soddy, who stated that Professor Perkin had already applied this principle to the chemistry courses at Oxford University. Chemistry students there had shown by their enthusiasm how much the change was appreciated.

Continuing, Professor Soddy said that since the president had prepared his address there had been a complication brought about by a request from the War Office that the universities should undertake research into the development to the utmost extent of chemical warfare research for offensive and defensive purposes. He expressed the view that it was a matter that must inevitably be considered, sooner or later, by the union. It ought to be considered before rather than after the occasion arose. He was glad that the executive

of the union had already decided to appoint a committee to go into the whole question.

The resolution disapproving of the policy of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, in establishing and financing research associations, which hands over to the private use of profit-seeking monopolies valuable knowledge obtained at the expense of the whole community, and places the research associations in a position to exploit the scientific workers of the country for their own benefit, was carried unanimously. Professor Soddy stated that the government had capitulated to the big business interests in politics and departed altogether from its original intentions. There was no greater example of unfair competition than in the chemical industries.

Mr. A. A. Griffith, in moving a resolution that for the present Advisory Council of the department should be substituted a council elected on different principles pointed out that there could be little effective criticism of the department under the existing arrangement whereby the government practically appointed its own critics. It was certain that a council part of which was elected by democratically constituted scientific organizations would result in more careful scrutiny and criticism of the acts of the department.

A resolution by Mr. F. A. Potts to the effect that scientific workers employed as whole-time officials in government departments should enjoy status and pay not less than those enjoyed by the administrative class of civil servants was carried unanimously.

Professor Leonard Bairstow was elected president for the ensuing year.

PLANT PATHOLOGY AT THE BROOKLYN
BOTANIC GARDEN

IN the ninth annual report of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden for 1919 attention was called to the need in this country of additional provision for fundamental research in plant diseases, and to the desirability of establishing at the garden a laboratory or institution of plant pathology. This institution is strategically located for the prosecution of certain phases of plant disease research since it is at the

center of one of the largest market garden regions in the country, is at the port of entry for most of our foreign plant importations, and at the terminus for the largest domestic shipments by rail of fruits and vegetables. The plant disease problems in connection with this commercial activity are many, and are of the highest scientific interest as well as of great economic importance. These facts have been recognized by the Botanic Garden governing committee and other friends of the garden, and a fund of fifty thousand dollars has been subscribed to become available over a period of four years from January 1, 1921. It is the intention to give special emphasis to the pure science phase of plant disease problems. A curatorship of plant pathology has been established, and it is planned to erect an experimental greenhouse at an early date. Dr. George Matthew Reed, of the Office of Cereal Investigations, Bureau of Plant Industry, Washington, D. C., has been appointed to the new curatorship beginning January 1, 1921.

THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY

THE annual meeting (the 106th regular meeting) of the American Physical Society will be held in Chicago, on December 28, 29 and 30, 1920, in affiliation with Section B—Physics—of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The meetings will be held in the lecture room of the Kent Chemical Laboratory of the University of Chicago.

The program of technical and scientific papers, to be given on Tuesday and Thursday, will be in charge of the Physical Society. On Wednesday morning there will be a joint session with the Optical Society of America.

The session on the afternoon of Wednesday, will be in charge of Section B, at which time Professor Max Mason, the retiring vice-president and chairman of Section B, will give an address on "From Oersted to Einstein." This will be followed by a symposium on "Recent Progress in Magnetism" with papers by S. J. Barnett, S. R. Williams and A. H. Compton.

Other meetings for the current season are as follows:

107. February 25–26, 1921. New York.

108. April 22–23, 1921. Washington.

109. Time not determined. Pacific Coast Section.

DAYTON C. MILLER,
Secretary

CASE SCHOOL OF APPLIED SCIENCE,
CLEVELAND, OHIO

THE MATHEMATICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

THE fifth annual meeting of the Mathematical Association of America and the second annual meeting of Illinois section will be held at the University of Chicago on Tuesday and Wednesday, December 28 and 29, 1920, in affiliation with the American Association for the Advancement of Science and in connection with the western meeting of the American Mathematical Society. The Illinois section will meet jointly with the Association in all its sessions, but will hold a separate business meeting on Tuesday afternoon.

On Wednesday evening at half past six there will be a joint dinner at the Quadrangle Club of all the mathematical organizations, together with Section D (Astronomy) of the American Association.

The meetings will be held in Ryerson Physical Laboratory and in the physiological laboratory. The former is situated near the corner of 58th Street and University Avenue, the latter is the southwest building of the Hull Biological group near 57th Street.

It is proposed that the Mathematical Association of America should emphasize in its meetings the presentation of historical papers, and to this end it welcomes the opportunity to meet the newly organized Section L (Historical and Philological Sciences, including the History of Science) of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in two joint sessions for the reading of such papers. It is also planned that the association should encourage the presentation of expository papers of a fairly elementary character, and several such papers have been included in this program.