SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

BRITISH NATIONAL UNION OF SCIENTIFIC WORKERS[1]

THE proceedings at the annual council meeting of the National Union of Scientific Workers, held at the Imperial College of Science on January 26, were enlivened by a spirited discussion on the position of the general secretary, Major A. G. Church, now that he has been elected member of Parliament for Leyton (East). The suggestion was made that his personal association with a political party might give the union a political complexion, but the majority of the representatives present were evidently of the opinion that the more scientific workers there were in Parliament, irrespective of party, the more likelihood there would be of science exercising its proper influence in national affairs.

Mr. F. T. Brooks (Cambridge), in presenting the sixth annual report, emphasized the need for more propaganda among leaders of industry and public bodies in order that the importance of science to the nation should be more fully appreciated. During the year, a number of public meetings were arranged in different centers of industry, presided over by representatives of Chambers of Commerce and other public men. A *questionnaire* had been addressed to all members of the last Parliament with the view of ascertaining their attitude towards research and the public endowment of research institutions, and an offer had been made to certain industrial undertakings to put at their disposal the services of the Research Council, with the view of their making proposals for the proper utilization of science in their industries. The fact is fully appreciated by the executive of the union that upon fuller recognition of the potentialities of science depends the welfare of the scientific workers who are being turned out from our universities yearly. It is hoped that the prominence given to this question at the forthcoming British Empire Exhibition at Wembley through the efforts of the British Science Guild will have far-reaching effects.

For the past two years at least, the claims made by the union to the treasury and other government departments for the improvement of the salaries and conditions of service of scientific workers in government departments have been weakened by the prevailing conditions of scientific workers in industry and in the universities. The attitude of the administrative heads of departments is demonstrated in the terms of the report of the committee on the pay of state servants. In this report it is stated that while the salaries of administrative officers can not be based upon those which can be obtained by men of similar standing in outside professions, those of the scientific and technical officers were rightly based upon the current market rates. The union will continue to press for a new inquiry into the position of civil servants engaged in scientific and technical work, and the setting up of the new Civil Service National Whitley Council, representation on both sides of which shall be confined mainly to scientific and technical officers. On the existing National Whitley Council, science has practically no voice, and to this fact can be attributed the want of success which has attended the efforts of the union to obtain any measure of justice or equity of treatment.

Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, the retiring president, in her address dealt with the need for a federation of scientific bodies with the view of the ultimate creation of a General Scientific Council similar to that of the General Medical Council; this would lead to the ideal of science as a self-governing profession.

Professor G. H. Hardy, of Oxford, was elected president of the union for the ensuing year, while Dr. J. W. Evans was elected president of the Research Council.

[1] From *Nature*.

INTERNATIONAL OCEANOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH

A FAR-REACHING proposal for the extension of International Oceanographical Research was submitted by Professor O. Pettersson and Commander C. F. Drechsel to the International Council for the exploration of the Sea at its meeting in Paris in October, 1923, in a memorandum, since issued as an extract from Vol. 32 of the Reports of the Council. As abstracted in the *Geographical Journal* it is pointed out that the result of international research already carried out is to show that there exists an interchange of waters and of living organisms between different parts of the ocean on a far larger scale than was considered possible twenty years ago, exemplified, *e.g.*, by the new facts brought to light respecting the migrations of the eel. Such discoveries suggest further problems for solution, and of these two are put forward as of special importance, namely: (1) Whether the changes observed in the fish-life correspond to changes in the current system of the ocean; (2) whether these changes are periodic. From the study of the first it should be possible to determine whether the migration of fishes are physiological, *i.e.*, due to what is usually spoken of as instinct, or whether they depend upon physical conditions. An answer to the second problem would help towards a forecast of the monthly and yearly output of fisheries. While the normal work of the International Council must be kept within certain limits, concentrated, *e.g.*, on the upper layers of the sea to a depth of not over 1,000 meters, wider investigations must be reserved

for special expeditions. It was hoped that the opening of the Panama Canal would afford the opportunity for concerted research in the Atlantic by the ships taking part in the ceremony, but the war frustrated the plan. Now, it is pointed out, a new opportunity presents itself through the offer for sale of *L'Hirondelle*, the yacht of the late Prince of Monaco, fitted up for oceanographic research in the most complete manner possible. It is proposed that this should be acquired for an expedition embracing all the oceans and lasting perhaps four years, the total cost being reckoned at from £120,000 to £140,000—a sum which, it is held, could be provided by the cooperation of all the countries interested. General approval of the scheme on the part of the International Council was expressed in a resolution passed during the Paris meeting.

THE BIRD SANCTUARY IN THE FARNE ISLANDS

ANOTHER important bird sanctuary, the Farne Islands, off the coast of Northumberland, has been secured in perpetuity for Great Britain. According to an announcement made by Mr. Collingwood Thorp, of Alnwick, the necessary funds for purchasing the islands for the National Trust have now been received or promised.

Earlier in the month Lord Grey of Fallodon had drawn attention to the movement to secure the islands, which are described as one of the most remarkable and wonderful breeding places for sea birds in the British Islands. They are the northernmost breeding place of the Sandwich Tern and the southernmost breeding place of the Eider duck, and without organized protection the islands would, under modern conditions, be destroyed as a breeding place for the rarer species. Now continuous protection is assured, and when the islands have been handed over to the National Trust they will still be managed, financially and otherwise, by a local committee. This body will require funds to provide watchers during the breeding season, and so the existing Farne Islands Association will continue as before.

This will make the fourth sanctuary for birds vested in the National Trust. There are already two other reserves on the east coast, 1,700 acres at Blakeney Point in Norfolk, which is largely used by migratory birds, and Scolt Head, not far away, which comprises some 1,200 acres. These are tracts of wild land and seashore, and during the breeding seasons watchers are maintained to prevent thoughtless interference with the birds. Wicken Fen, near Soham, in Cambridgeshire, is really an insect reserve, but is used by several of the rarer birds.

PROPOSED INVESTIGATIONS IN HEAT TRANSMISSION

THE National Research Council has been requested to undertake investigations in heat transmission, the results of which will provide the designing, operating and research engineer with more reliable information.

Heat transmission is in an unsatisfactory state. There is the greatest need for quantitative information that can be safely generalized, for the sifting and correlation of present knowledge and for laying out a careful program of investigations to secure the information that is lacking. Data is needed by the refrigerating, heating and ventilating, electrical, automotive and mechanical engineers.

In accordance with the general policy of the National Research Council a suitable committee will be organized, which will include experts of all branches. A program will be laid out, and then solicitation will be made to secure the necessary funds and facilities.

An executive committee has been selected consisting of:

F. Paul Anderson, Director, Research Laboratory of American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers, at U. S. Bureau of Mines, Pittsburgh, Pa.

W. L. Badger, Professor of Chemical Engineering, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.

W. H. Carrier, President, Carrier Engineering Corpn., Newark, N. J.

Harvey N. Davis, Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

H. C. Dickinson, Chief Div. III, Heat and Thermometer, Bureau of Standards, Washington, D. C.

H. Harrison, Brunswick-Kroeschell Company, New York City.

F. E. Mathews, Consulting Mechanical Engineer, Leonia, N. J.

George A. Orrok, Consulting Engineer, 124 East 15th Street, New York City.

T. S. Taylor, Research Physicist, Westinghouse Electric and Mfg. Co., East Pittsburgh, Pa.

A meeting of this committee will be held in the near future and the necessary steps taken to launch the project.

HEAT TRANSFER SYMPOSIUM

THE Division of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry, American Chemical Society, will start the Heat Transfer Symposium of which Professor W. H. McAdams is chairman on Tuesday afternoon, April 22. A large number of papers have been prepared for this symposium among which are the following:

Heat transmission in an inclined rapid circulation type vacuum evaporator: D. J. VANMARLE, Buffalo Foundry and Machine Co.

Evaporator scale formation: W. L. MCCABE and C. S.