

Ground was broken for the new building in March; it is expected that it will be completed and equipped in less than a year. The building will be of heavy fireproof construction, calculated to be free from disturbing vibrations. Provision for experiments with electricity, light, X-rays and temperature will be unusually complete. Extensive additional equipment for physiological work is also provided. The building will include one general and fifteen private biochemical laboratories, two general biophysical laboratories, one general and twenty-seven private laboratories of the biological type, but arranged *en suite* with the biochemical laboratories, five experimental dark-rooms, a suite of four rooms for X-ray work, a photographic and developing room, draughting room, three special balance rooms, administration offices and committee rooms, a galvanometer room, and (in the basement) store-rooms, storage battery room, refrigerating equipment and constant temperature rooms, and a machine shop. The library wing will have stock rooms with capacity of about 100,000 volumes, a large reading room and study rooms, and librarian's offices. The auditorium will seat 545.

Future needs have been anticipated to some extent in the plans and it is hoped that the new accommodations added to those already in existence will be adequate for some years. The administration of the laboratory looks confidently for the continuation of the support so generously extended for many years by the cooperating institutions, seventy in number in 1923, and for the moral backing of the biologists of the country. The laboratory will have more to offer; if support was deserved before, it will be more so in the future. The responsibility for developing the laboratory as one of the chief centers of biological research of the world rests squarely upon the shoulders of the biologists and the research institutions of the country.

FRANK R. LILLIE,
Director

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

BRITISH BOTANICAL CONFERENCE¹

IN view of the fact that many overseas botanists may be expected to visit England this year in connection with the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, an Imperial Botanical Conference will be held at the Imperial College of Science and Technology on July 7-16. The arrangements for this conference are in the hands of an executive committee of which Sir David Prain is chairman, Dr. A. B. Rendle, treasurer, and Mr. F. T. Brooks, secretary. The preliminary program shows that discussion will be arranged upon general topics likely to interest both

¹ From *Nature*.

home and overseas botanists. Thus the promotion of a botanical survey of the empire is to be introduced by Dr. A. W. Hill, Mr. A. G. Tansley and a number of overseas botanists are to discuss vegetation surveys and training in field geology; Professor R. H. Biffen introduces the subject of plant breeding, Professor Percival the importance of selection. Plant physiology is represented by discussions upon cold storage of apples and crop physiology; under plant pathology, tropical experience will be utilized in the discussion of sugar-cane mosaic, bud-rot of coco-nut, and brown bast of rubber, whilst the relations of plant pathology to genetics and to silviculture will be considered in separate discussions. Professor J. B. Farmer will open a discussion upon the important question of interchange of staff and post-graduate students between overseas and home universities and the desirability of providing further facilities for botanical research within the tropics and dominions. The program outlined is certainly of great imperial significance, and it is only to be regretted that the executive has not seen its way to bring some of these problems before a wider overseas audience in the conference halls at Wembley itself. Whilst the opportunities for meeting and discussion provided by the conference will no doubt be welcomed by overseas botanists, there is no doubt that the occasion is peculiarly appropriate for the numerous home botanists, many of whom will be deprived of their usual annual opportunity for botanical "shop" with their colleagues by their inability to attend Section K at its distant rendezvous in Toronto. All such botanists will be very welcome at the conference, and they are asked to notify Mr. F. T. Brooks, 31 Tenison Avenue, Cambridge, of their intention to be present. A subscription of one pound toward the expenses of organization is being asked from those proposing to attend.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOIL SCIENCE

THE International Conference on Soil Science, to be held in Rome from May 12 to 19, will be the fourth of a series. The first conference was held in 1909 in Budapest, the second in 1911 in Stockholm and the third in 1922 in Prague. The organizing committee distributed last February a provisional program of the conference, which promises to be important.

The Italian Minister of National Economy, Professor Corbino, has promised to be the honorary chairman. The conference will be held at the International Institute of Agriculture in Rome.

Subscriptions are being received from all parts of the world and the number of communications and reports to be presented amounts already to over 200.