

## SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

### PROGRESS OF THE WORLD FARM CENSUS

THIRTEEN countries in Central and South America have promised cooperation in the World Agricultural Census of 1930, reports L. M. Estabrook, director of the census for the International Institute of Agriculture, who recently returned to Washington from an 11,000-mile trip to the capitals of Guatemala, Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, British Guiana, Trinidad and Barbados.

The inclusion of these countries in the census brings the total representation in the project to about 97 per cent. of the land surface, 98 per cent. of the total population and approximately 99 per cent. of the total agricultural production of the world. The only countries not visited by Mr. Estabrook since his appointment as director in 1925 are Afghanistan, Persia, Bolivia and some of the West African colonies and small islands in which agriculture is relatively unimportant but for which cooperation has been promised by their home governments.

The undertaking of a world census of agriculture in 1930 was approved by the general assembly of the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome in 1924, and the preliminary work of organizing the census was made possible by the cooperation of the International Education Board, the United States Department of Agriculture and the International Institute of Agriculture. The census program and standard form of census questionnaire have been approved by the permanent committee and two general assemblies of the institute, by the International Institute of Statistics and by the Diplomatic Conference on Economic Statistics that met in Geneva in November, 1928.

The purpose of the world census of agriculture is to provide more complete, accurate and comparable international statistics relating to agriculture, to provide a secure basis for annual crop reports and statistics and to improve the agricultural statistical organization of many countries. It will be the first census ever attempted in all countries of the world in the same year and according to the same general plan. The International Institute of Agriculture, the International Institute of Statistics and the Diplomatic Conference on Economic Statistics have recommended that the agricultural census be repeated every ten years.

Mr. Estabrook reports that the Central and South American countries visited on his last tour provide a large part of the world supply of coffee, cocoa, ivory-nuts, coconuts, bananas, sugar and some other tropical products. He says there are great possibilities for agricultural development in these areas, although lim-

ited by the broken character of the country, and that progress will be slow until better roads, steamship lines and other means of transportation and communication are provided. Need is expressed also for further development in the agricultural, research and statistical departments of these countries.

### REPORT OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FLOOD CONTROL

RECOMMENDATIONS made in the report on the relation of forestry to flood control issued by direction of the Committee on Flood Control of the House of Representatives and prepared by the Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture are summarized in the *New York Times* as follows:

Completely organized forest-fire protection as the first step in improving forest cover should be rapidly put into effect by the federal government, the states and the landowners.

Cooperative forest planting should be extended, so that idle and waste submarginal lands may be reforested. Results will be of increasing value from a flood standpoint through increased local water retention and decreased run-off and erosion. Planting is important in many of the critical areas, particularly in the bluff region from the Ohio River southward, in southwestern Wisconsin and in the Ohio River drainage. Machinery for carrying out these first two recommendations already is provided in the Clarke-McNary forestry act.

Increase is recommended in forest extension activities to acquaint owners of submarginal or forest lands with the best methods of treating these lands. This calls for increased activity among farm woodland owners under existing authority in the Clarke-McNary act, and for further authority to carry this extension to other than woodland owners.

Continued protection and administration of the national forests, parks and game refuges under present policies is recommended and addition to the national forests of adjoining forested areas of unreserved public domain to insure the protective benefits found in organized federal administration.

Prompt extension of public ownership is recommended in many critical forest areas; first, in order that the federal government may have the direct jurisdiction necessary to enable it to improve forest conditions on lands which now contribute unnecessarily large and destructive run-off, and, second, to enable the federal government to protect heavy investments in flood-control structures, the permanency of which would otherwise be jeopardized by serious erosion. In addition to lands within purchase units already approved the report indicates some 6,000,000

acres in critical areas which should be administered as public forests. For the better management, protection and reforestation of the remaining 125,000,000 acres of forest land in the Mississippi watershed not in public ownership reliance is placed on individual and cooperative effort, stimulated by federal and state cooperation and leadership.

"It remains to be seen," says the report, "how far such a plan will be found adequate to meet the situation. If success exceeds reasonable expectations, it may be possible to reduce somewhat the total area to be finally purchased. On the other hand, if private forestry, even under the stimulation of federal and state assistance, fails in any substantial measure to meet the requirements of satisfactory stream-flow regulation and soil conservation, to that extent its replacement by public forestry is inevitable. The only other alternative would be to classify flood destruction and soil depletion as less troublesome and costly than the cure, an admission of weakness and incompetence too distasteful for the people of this country to accept."

Investigations into the ways and means of arresting erosion by forestry measures, the determination of the best species of plants for revegetating denuded and eroding lands and the conditions under which they should be used, and research into proper management of range, pasture and forest lands, also are recommended. These investigations should be carried on simultaneously at several places in the Mississippi Valley. They are badly needed in the bluff region on the east side of the Mississippi River, in southwestern Wisconsin, in the rolling or plateau lands of the lower Ohio River drainage proper, and in the mountainous section of the Appalachians. They are also badly needed in the Arkansas "Breaks," in the northwestern "bad lands," and at several places in the open range lands.

#### THE NEW LABORATORY BUILDING AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

THERE is being erected at Columbia University at a cost of \$1,000,000 a new building, which according to Dr. Henry Lee Norris, director of buildings, as reported in the New York *Tribune*, will be one of the finest and best equipped laboratory buildings in the country.

The building is designed primarily to house the department of natural sciences, will be ten stories high and will be equipped with many modern laboratories. On the roof will be an experimental greenhouse for the use of the department of botany. Floor connections with the Schermerhorn building will be made so that the new structure will be in a sense an annex, corresponding to the Chandler laboratories opened two years ago on the opposite side of the campus.

Construction work is being pushed steadily. The framework has been up for several months and the brick walls are almost completed. The greenhouse has been so designed that it will fit in with the general planning level of the Columbia buildings. The new campus addition is situated on the north side of the campus at Amsterdam Avenue and 119th Street.

Zoology, botany, mineralogy, psychology and agriculture departments will be housed in the annex, relieving an overcrowded condition in Schermerhorn Hall that has existed for several years. One floor of classrooms separates the departments, providing expansion when needed. The building design has been made flexible so that in future years classrooms may be turned into laboratories without too much remodeling.

The department of psychology has been without a permanent home for some time, its present headquarters being in the physics building on 120th Street. Removal of these offices to the annex will not only provide better quarters for the psychologists, but will make way for expansion in the physics department.

Columbia's campus is gradually being enlarged according to a well-ordered plan. With all of the gaps filled with structures, both Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue will be lined with solid rows. Entrances to the campus will be made in the cross-streets.

The new annex under construction adds another link to the group which will eventually surround "The Green" at the north end of the campus, the more recent additions being the Chandler laboratories and the physics building.

#### SUMMER WORK OF HARVARD GEOLOGISTS

ACCORDING to an article in the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, Professor R. A. Daly, Professor Charles Palache and Professor E. S. Larsen will not be in the field, but will stay in or near Cambridge and complete studies begun earlier. Professor Kirtley F. Mather and Professor P. E. Raymond will conduct the Harvard summer field course in geology in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. At the end of July, Professor L. W. Collet, of the University of Geneva, Switzerland, and his assistant, Dr. Edward Parejas, will join them in a detailed study of the structure of the Rocky Mountains in Canada. This will be a Shaler Memorial investigation and will occupy the party the remainder of the summer.

Professor Kirk Bryan will spend the early part of the summer in a study for the U. S. Geological Survey in cooperation with the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation. The work will be on the irrigation projects on the Pecos River in southeastern New Mexico and Texas. Professor Bryan will examine the Avalon Reservoir on the Carlsbad Project, several sites on the Red Bluff