SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE IMPERIAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH BUREAUS

THE *Journal* of the Australian Council for Scientific and Industrial Research gives a summary of the first annual report of the executive committee concerning the organization and objects of the eight new Imperial Agricultural Research Bureaus. Their function as defined by the 1927 Imperial Agricultural Research Conference, which recommended their formation, is to facilitate the collection and dissemination of scientific information among the agricultural research workers of the empire.

The executive council itself is composed of nominees of the different governments of the empire, and it elects its own chairman and appoints its own officers. To that extent the organization of the bureaus is somewhat unique, in that in a technical sphere of work the administrative direction of activities for a common empire purpose is vested in a body composed of nominees of the governments, and not in one of His Majesty's governments acting on behalf of all governments.

The eight bureaus, namely, those of soil science, animal nutrition, animal health, animal genetics, animal parasitology, plant genetics (herbage plants), plant genetics (other than herbage plants) and fruit production have now been fully organized and are all actively functioning. Their location at existing research institutes has enabled them to operate economically and efficiently. The various institutes have placed accommodation at the disposal of the bureaus on generous terms, and have assisted in numerous other ways, but particularly by making their libraries freely available, and by allowing their officers to give advice and help on particular inquiries. Although the bureaus were established only recently, several of them were able, before the close of the year, to commence the distribution (at first in mimeographed form) of information in their particular branches of agricultural science. For instance, the Bureau of Animal Nutrition has issued a collection of reprints of special interest to investigators, and also a summary of research work on animal nutrition now in progress throughout the empire; the Bureau of Soil Science has issued a number of "technical communications," particularly in regard to soil classification; and the Bureau of Animal Genetics is issuing a quarterly journal containing a number of articles which would ordinarily be quite inaccessible to research workers in the more distant parts of the empire.

Another object of the bureaus is to facilitate arrangements for research workers granted "study leave" to undertake well-thought-out courses of further study and investigation. All the directors of the bureaus would be glad to advise any investigators interested. Another function on which the executive council and the directors lay special stress is that of promoting in every way possible direct contacts between officers of the bureaus and research workers overseas. To further this end, an officer who has either received part of his early training or has served for some time in some portion of the empire overseas, has been selected in almost every case for the post of chief officer under the directors. The executive council hopes that research workers who contemplate visiting the United Kingdom in any year will inform the appropriate bureau of their intention. It also hopes that they will visit the bureau, where they will be assured of a hearty welcome.

MINERAL VALUES IN ALASKA

AN effort to determine the mineral values of Alaska will be carried out this summer by the Department of the Interior. The recent Congress appropriated $250,000 "for continuation of the investigation of mineral and other resources of Alaska," along the Alaska Railroad. This is in addition to the regular appropriation for work in Alaska.

The appropriation was placed in the hands of Secretary Wilbur and the work has been organized through the U. S. Geological Survey. Though this special appropriation is not available until July 1, the Geological Survey, considering the short working season in Alaska, has arranged to make advances from its own funds that the work may be started early and a full season of results attained.

Sixty thousand dollars has been allocated to Willow Creek, Fairbanks, Copper Mountain, Girdwood, Kantishna and Moose Pass districts, and a party will operate in each of these areas. Twenty-four thousand dollars have been allocated to the West Fork of Chulitna, Valdez Creek, Talkeetna Mountains and Yentna districts and the investigators will form four parties. To investigate, test and report on nonmetallic minerals such as clay, limestone, marl, etc., in the railroad belt, and prepare a pamphlet on their economic value and possibilities of production $5,000 has been set aside. It is estimated that the surface investigation of the Anthracite Ridge coal field will cost $27,000, and that the core drilling in that field will cost $100,000.

As the purpose of the investigation is to develop natural resources along the Alaska Railroad, it is important that the results of the examinations shall be published as quickly as possible after the field work has been completed. To this end the Geological Sur-