

of the research work undertaken by the British Committee of the International Electro-Technical Commission.

The new laboratory will have two main functions—to give instruction in existing knowledge concerning high voltage technology to engineering graduates, and to provide research facilities to extend existing knowledge on the same subject. In addition, the facilities of the laboratory will be available to research organizations for approved work, and it is hoped that advantage will be taken of this opportunity in the same way as the British Electrical and Allied Industries Research Association have utilized the resources of the college in the past.

The main laboratory has been constructed by removing from an existing building in the college a floor that divided it. Its main dimensions are 80 feet by 40 feet by 38 feet high, and the galleries of the original building now serve as excellent observation areas. In view of the layout of the laboratory, where five sources of very high voltage exist in various parts of the building, it has been necessary to provide a complete system of interlocked doors and screens so that, when once the occupants have vacated the danger area and the gates have been shut, no one can possibly enter it again without automatically cutting off the power. This has been achieved by means of electrical and mechanical interlocking devices arranged so as to permit the maximum use of each item of the equipment with the minimum of interference with the remainder of the laboratory.

Lectures on high voltage technology at the college will be supplemented by laboratory work.

FOUNDATION OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

AUGUST 10 is the ninetieth anniversary of the establishment of the Smithsonian Institution by Act of Congress on August 10, 1846, for "the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men."

"That date," says a statement issued from the Smithsonian Institution, "may be regarded as highly significant when considered from the viewpoint of nine decades later and of a world whose material life has been revolutionized by scientific research." The statement continues:

Few foresaw, even dimly, such an outcome in 1846. Pure science then was almost exclusively a hobby of individuals. Its pursuit was confined largely to gentlemen of means and leisure. In institutions of higher education it was far outranked by the so-called humanities.

Among those with at least a dim foreboding of the wonders ahead was an inconspicuous English scientist, who had died at Genoa in 1829. Before he died he concluded an act that was to immortalize him as one of the world's great benefactors of mankind. He incorporated in his will a clause leaving his entire fortune to the Gov-

ernment of the United States, in case his nephew died intestate, "to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men."

This gentleman was James Smithson, a natural son of the Duke of Northumberland. He was a student of chemistry and mineralogy whose early promise led to his election to the Royal Society of Great Britain shortly after his graduation from Oxford. The value of the estate that finally came to our National Government amounted to about \$550,000. With this was set up by far the largest institution, up to that time, devoted to the pursuit of pure science without regard to immediate and obvious utility.

Thus was the support of science placed on a new basis. Endowed research institutions, some of much greater wealth, have sprung up over Europe and America since then, with the rapid realization that the shortest road to progress is the discovery of the basic laws of nature and that this can best be done by adequately supported, coordinated programs of research.

The terms of the Smithson will, in the opinion of Dr. Charles G. Abbot, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, are ideal for such a purpose. So rapid is the progress of science that a problem that may seem of supreme importance to-day is outmoded to-morrow, and funds left for its pursuit exclusively become involved in serious complications. "For the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men" allows plenty of leeway, regardless of the developments of the future. The words will be as applicable a thousand years hence as to-day. Smithson's own words were indeed prophetic: "The best blood of England flows in my veins; on my father's side I am a Northumberland, on my mother's I am related to kings, but this avails me not. *My name shall live in the memory of man when the titles of the Northumberlands and the Percys are extinct and forgotten.*"

REGIONAL STATIONS OF THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

THE Bankhead-Jones Act contains a provision for the establishment and operation of regional research laboratories by the Secretary of Agriculture. The *Experiment Station Record* reports that these laboratories are to be set up in the major agricultural regions, and under their jurisdiction research supplementing that otherwise provided for may be conducted "into laws and principles underlying basic problems of agriculture in its broadest aspects; research relating to the improvement of, the quality of, the development of new and improved methods of production of, distribution of and new and extended uses and markets for agricultural commodities and by-products and manufactures thereof; and research relating to the conservation, development and use of land and water resources for agricultural purposes."

The act prescribes that half the special research fund which it allots to the department must be used for these regional laboratories. For the fiscal year which ended on June 30, the total fund was at least \$392,000. The amount available for the regional laboratories was therefore approximately \$196,000. For the following year, if the law remains unaltered, there will be \$392,000; for 1938, \$588,000; for 1939, \$784,000 and for 1940 and each year thereafter \$980,000. The maximum thus will be a sum appreciably higher than the \$720,000 granted annually to the State Experiment Stations under the original Hatch Act.

No further restrictions are imposed by the act as to the number of regional laboratories, their location or the scope or details of their work. Three regional stations have been definitely provided for. These include a vegetable breeding laboratory near Charleston, S. C.; a cooperative soybean industrial research laboratory at Urbana, Ill.; and a grass-breeding and pasture laboratory at State College, Pa.

The vegetable breeding laboratory has for its purpose the breeding and introduction of high quality, disease-resistant vegetables especially adapted to the southern states, the states cooperating through an experiment station council. The experimental work is to be centered at the laboratory itself on a tract of about 450 acres acquired near the South Carolina Truck Experiment Station, but the materials produced there will also be tested in the cooperating states. The laboratory will be in charge of Dr. B. L. Wade, senior geneticist of the Bureau of Plant Industry.

For the Cooperative Soybean Industrial Research Laboratory the University of Illinois has made available laboratory space and other facilities. Dr. O. E. May, of the Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, has been appointed in charge of the laboratory, while the extensive breeding work contemplated will be under the direction of W. J. Morse, of the Bureau of Plant Industry. The research program is to be planned year by year by representatives of these bureaus and the twelve state experiment stations concerned and the director of the laboratory.

The grass breeding and pasture laboratory was established on recommendation of experiment station directors of the northeastern region. Facilities have been made available by the Pennsylvania Experiment Station, which has had under way pasture studies and other relevant work for several years. Among the objectives is the establishment of a nursery of all grasses and legumes adapted to the region and breeding experiments to develop new and better grasses. The leader of the general project is P. V. Cardon, in charge of the Division of Forage Crops and Diseases of the Bureau of Plant Industry.

THE CANCER INSTITUTE

THE first Cancer Institute will meet on September 7, 8 and 9 at the University of Wisconsin. Dr. William D. Stovall, director of the State Laboratory of Hygiene at the university, is chairman of the committee in charge.

Investigators from abroad who will speak at the general sessions and who will lead round table discussions include: Dr. Liev Kreyberg, of the University of Oslo; Professor Henry Coutard, chief of the department of x-ray therapy for cancer of the Radium Institute at the University of Paris, and Dr. Madge Thurlow Macklin, associate professor of histology and embryology at the University of Western Ontario.

Americans who are expected to present papers are: Dr. C. C. Little, director of the Roscoe B. Jackson Laboratory for Cancer Research at Bar Harbor, Me.; Dr. Edgar Allen, chairman of the department of anatomy of the Medical School of Yale University; Dr. H. B. Andervont, biologist of the U. S. Public Health Service at Boston, Mass. Dr. S. P. Reimann, pathologist and director of the Research Institute of the Lankenau Hospital and professor of experimental pathology in the Graduate School of the University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Emil Novak, associate gynecologist at the Johns Hopkins Medical School; Dr. J. B. Murphy, director of cancer research at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research; Dr. James Ewing, professor of oncology at the Cornell University Medical School, member of the staff of the Memorial Hospital for the treatment of cancer, New York; Dr. Gioacchino Failla, physicist at the Memorial Hospital, and Dr. Warren H. Lewis, of the department of embryology of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, at Baltimore.

The expenses of the conference are being defrayed by the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation.

INTERNATIONAL FORESTRY CONGRESSES

THE second International Forestry Congress will be held in Budapest from September 10 to 14. This will be preceded by a meeting and tour of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations from August 25 to September 8.

The first International Congress of Forestry, held in Rome in 1926, urged the holding of similar conferences periodically and entrusted the calling of such meetings to the International Institute of Agriculture. Through the request of the institute the Hungarian Government has called this meeting.

One of the main objectives of the conference is to bring about a proper balance between forest growth and timber consumption through the efforts of international cooperation. Discussion will center around