SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC UNIONS

THE meeting of the International Council of Scientific Unions, which met this year for the first time in Great Britain, opened in London on April 26 with an informal reception by the president and fellows of the Royal Society. The delegates were received by Sir William Bragg, president of the society, and Dr. N.E. Nörland, of Copenhagen, delivered his address as president of the council. His subject was "The Figure of the Earth." Lectures were given by Sir William Bragg on "Classical Experiments made at the Royal Institution" and by Professor E. V. Appleton on "International Cooperation in Radio Research." On the following day an official reception was given by the University of London at which the degree of doctor of science was conferred on Dr. Nörland.

On April 27, Ramsay Macdonald, Lord President of the council, and Miss Macdonald received the delegates on behalf of the government at Lancaster House, and visits were made to the laboratories at the colleges of London University, research institutions, museums and the Broadcasting House. The sessions closed officially on May 3. The delegates were invited to attend the soiree of the Royal Society on May 4.

The International Council was established in 1919 to take the place of the International Association of Academies, which had lapsed during the war; it meets every three years, its membership being drawn from forty-two countries. The scientific unions, representing astronomy, geodesy and geophysics, chemistry, physics, scientific radio, geography and the biological sciences, present reports to the council at the time of the meeting, and during the three years interim pursue their activities as separate international bodies in affiliation with the council. At the meeting in London the Royal Society of Amsterdam proposed that a committee should be appointed to study what cooperation can be achieved in regard to the social responsibilities of science and scientific workers towards the dangers menacing the future of civilization. The council also had under consideration the report of the standing committee on the study of solar and terrestrial phenomena, and the report of the committee on the relations that should exist between the council and the Committee of Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations on matters concerned with international science.

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION AT NOTTINGHAM

THE British Association for the Advancement of Science has issued a preliminary program of arrangements for the annual meeting, which will be held this year at Nottingham from September 1 to 8. According to an abstract of this program in the London *Times*, Professor Sir Edward Poulton, in his presidential address, will deal with the history of evolutionary thought as recorded in the meetings of the British Association.

In the sectional programs many of the subjects to be discussed have been marked for inclusion in the series dealing with science and the public welfare. Among them are the sex ratio, which Professor F. A. E. Crew will discuss in his presidential address to the Zoology Section; the changing distribution of population, with which Professor C. B. Fawcett will deal in his presidential address to the Geography Section, and the modern study of plants in relation to education, on which Professor E. J. Salisbury will speak in his presidential address to the Botany Section.

The informative content of education will be the subject of H. G. Wells's presidential address to the Educational Science Section. J. M. Caie will address the Agriculture Section on state intervention in agriculture. Noise and the nation will be the subject of the presidential address of Dr. G. W. C. Kaye to the Mathematical and Physical Sciences Section, and economic research and industrial policy of Professer P. Sargent Florence before the Economics Section. Tests in common use for the diagnosis of color defect will be dealt with by Dr. Mary Collins in her presidential address to the Psychology Section.

Among other subjects which have been included in the series are x-ray methods and industry, problems of labor transference, the contribution of physiology to the health of the individual and the community, adult education, the problem of costs of distribution, the human factor in industry, industrial physics, chemistry and building research, motor vehicles and road safety, physiology as a subject of general education, planning the land of Britain and vulnerability of the national power supply.

Other sectional presidential addresses include those of Dr. F. L. Pyman (Chemistry Section), on recent research in chemotherapy; Sir Alexander Gibb (Engineering Section), on research in engineering; Professor L. J. Wills (Geology Section), on the Pleistocene history of the West Midlands; Dr. J. H. Hutton (Anthropology Section), on Assam origins in relation to Oceania, and Dr. E. P. Poulton (Physiology Section), on metabolism, nutrition and growth in man—some new views.

THE EDGAR FAHS SMITH COLLECTION OF CHEMICAL MEMORABILIA

AN endowment fund of $50,000 for the maintenance and future development of the collection of chemical memorabilia assembled by the late Dr. Edgar Fahs Smith, formerly professor of chemistry and provost

of the University of Pennsylvania, has been established by Mrs. Smith. It was through her generosity that the collection was presented to the university following the death in 1928 of Dr. Smith.

Since its acquisition the collection has been housed in several rooms of the John Harrison Laboratory of Chemistry which were occupied by Dr. Smith for many years, but frequent additions to the original collection have made it increasingly difficult to exhibit it satisfactorily in its present quarters. Coupled with this factor is a desire on the part of the university to provide additional space for the convenience of a constantly increasing number of students from this country and abroad who come to consult it. As a result, it is planned to collect funds as part of the bicentennial campaign of the university for a chemical museum sufficiently large to accommodate the collection and to allow for its future growth.

The collection of more than 7,000 items contains books on alchemy and chemistry, many of which are in Latin, German and old French; autograph letters and manuscripts of distinguished chemists of all nationalities; portrait prints and engravings of chemists from the days of alchemy to the present, and chemical preparations and apparatus. Included also are many rare books and manuscripts relating to the early history of the University of Pennsylvania and to its alumni, faculty members and trustees who were prominent in national affairs.

The collection on the history of chemistry has grown to nearly 10,000 items as a result of frequent gifts. It includes a copy of the "Alchemy" of Geber, printed in Latin in 1545. The first edition of "The Truth and Antiquity of Chemistry" by Robert Vallensis, published in Latin in 1561, said to be the first attempt at a history of chemistry ever made, was given by Professor Walter T. Taggart, of the university. The "Theatrum Chemicum," compiled by Elias Ashmole and published in London in 1652, is represented by a copy in its original binding. Contained in this copy, which was once part of the library of Sir Isaac Newton and which still bears his book-plate, are the "Ordinall of Alchemy," by Thomas Norton, and a poem by Chaucer dealing with the mysteries of alchemy. The book-plate of Lord Cornwallis is found in a volume by Bomare, published in 1768. The autograph of Samuel Taylor Coleridge appears in Barchusen's "Elements of Chemistry" published in 1718. Of Boerhaave's "Elements of Chemistry" there is a copy of the 1732 edition which he personally autographed. Represented by letters and manuscripts bearing their signatures are Priestley, Pasteur, Madame Curie and others. There are also a large number of portrait prints and engravings of prominent chemists.

The collection crosses the borderline into medicine to Paracelsus and the iatro-chemists, and later into physics with Thomas Graham and others, one of the most recent acquisitions being autograph letters of Sir Oliver Lodge and Dr. Max Planck.

The Smith collection also contains autograph letters from ten signers of the Declaration of Independence—Robert Morris, Benjamin Franklin, George Clymer, James Wilson, Benjamin Rush, Thomas McKean, John Penn, Francis Hopkinson, William Paca and James Smith, all of whom were either trustees or alumni of the University of Pennsylvania. There are autograph letters from General Anthony Wayne and Tech Tilghman, graduates of the university.

THE BOTANICAL COLLECTIONS OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY

The Harvard Alumni Bulletin reports that a thorough renovation of the Arnold Arboretum in Jamaica Plain and the Harvard Botanic Garden in Cambridge has been under way during the past year.

Approximately 600 new shrubs and trees have been added to the permanent plantings of the arboretum, and extensive repairs made on the roads, paths and benches.

The grounds of the Botanic Garden have been thoroughly gone over and replanted. The growth about the Gray Herbarium building was removed, and replaced with selected shrubs from the arboretum. The old rock garden was torn up and a new one established, the overgrown iris plantings thinned out and reestablished on a new site, and the old area replaced with a lawn. The number of beds for annual and perennial plants was reduced, and the growing stock of the garden reinforced by shrubs from the arboretum.

The greenhouses were removed, and most of the plants sent to the Atkins Institution in Cuba, the roof greenhouses of the Biological Laboratory and the Bussey Institution. The remaining stock was given to the Massachusetts State College, Boston Teachers College, Wellesley College and the Boston Park Department.

Professor Elmer D. Merrill, administrator of the Harvard Botanical Collections, also says in his annual report that during the year the Arnold Arboretum distributed to other institutions 1,400 packages of seeds and scions and cuttings of 900 species and varieties of shrubs and trees. Accessions to the arboretum included 450 packets of seeds, 600 scions and cuttings and 1,900 plants.

The herbarium received important collections from China, Malaysia, India, Australia, Africa, Mexico, Central America and South America. These additions brought the total number of specimens to 430,000.