

*Bulletin of the Imperial Institute.***THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE.**

The Imperial Institute was founded as the National Memorial of the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, by whom it was opened in May, 1893. The principal object of the Institute is to promote the utilisation of the commercial and industrial resources of the Empire by arranging comprehensive exhibitions of natural products, especially of India and the Colonies, and providing for the collection and dissemination of scientific, technical and commercial information relating to them. Until the end of 1902, the Imperial Institute was managed by a Governing Body, of which the Prince of Wales was president, and an Executive Council, including representatives of the Indian Empire and of all the British Colonies and Dependencies. In 1900, the building became the property of H.M. Government, by whom the western portion and galleries were leased to the Governing Body of the Imperial Institute, the eastern and central portions being assigned to the use of the University of London. In July, 1902, an Act of Parliament was passed transferring the management of the Imperial Institute to the Board of Trade, assisted by an Advisory Committee including representatives of India and the Colonies, as well as of the India and Colonial Offices, the Board of Agriculture, and the Board of Trade. This Act took effect on January 1st, 1903.

In accordance with the above Act, the Imperial Institute is now managed by the Board of Trade in consultation with the Advisory Committee, through their Commercial, Labour, and Statistical Department, of which Sir Alfred Bateman, K.C.M.G., is Comptroller-General.

The Board of Trade have appointed Professor Wyndham Dunstan, F.R.S., hitherto Director of the Scientific and Technical Department, to be Director of the Imperial Institute at South Kensington, with charge of the various branches of work there carried on.

The work hitherto carried on by the Imperial Institute at South Kensington and in the City for the supply of general, commercial, statistical and tariff intelligence is now conducted by the Commercial Intelligence Branch of the Board of Trade, which, subject to the Comptroller-General, is under the direction of Mr. Thomas Worthington. (See statement as to the work of the Commercial Intelligence Branch published in the "Board of Trade Journal.")

The principal entrance of the Imperial Institute is at the west (Queen's Gate) end of Imperial Institute Road. This gives access to the principal floor, containing the general enquiry office, library, reading rooms, colonial conference rooms, and the library and reading room of the Northbrook Society.

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The first floor contains the Director's office, the offices of the British Women's Emigration Association, the Colonial Nursing Association, and the general enquiry office in connection with the Indian and Colonial collections of commercial products. The Imperial Institute.

The second floor is entirely devoted to the laboratories of the Scientific and Technical Department.

The public entrances to the Indian and Colonial collections are at the East (Prince's Gate) end and the West (Queen's Gate) end of the Imperial Institute Road.

The Imperial Institute works in co-operation with the Commercial Intelligence Branch of the Board of Trade at Whitehall, with an enquiry office in the City (49, Eastcheap, E.C.) under the management of this branch, and with the Emigrants Information Office in Westminster.

Indian and Colonial Economic Collections.—The collections of economic products illustrative of the commercial resources of India and the Colonies are arranged on a geographical system in the galleries of the Imperial Institute. Mr. W. G. Freeman, A.R.C.S., B.Sc. (Lond.), F.L.S., lately of the Imperial Department of Agriculture for the West Indies, has been appointed Superintendent of these Collections.

Special Curators are appointed by the Governments of India, Ceylon, Canada, and the Cape; whilst the operations of the Indian Section are supervised by a committee appointed by the India Office.

The collections are open free to the public daily, except on Sundays, from 11 a.m. till dusk.

It is intended, in consultation with the Governments concerned, to re-arrange and make extensive additions to many of these collections, and this work has been already commenced.

The following British Colonies and Dependencies are represented by collections of their products:—

BRITISH AFRICA.

Cape Colony.
Natal.
Rhodesia.
British Central Africa.
East and West African Settlements.
Mauritius.
Seychelles.

BRITISH AUSTRALASIA.

New South Wales.
Victoria.
South Australia.
Western Australia.
Queensland.
Tasmania.
New Zealand.
Fiji.

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Dominion of Canada.
 Newfoundland.
 Bermuda.
 Bahamas.
 Jamaica.
 Barbados.
 The Leeward Islands.
 The Windward Islands.
 Trinidad and Tobago.
 British Guiana.
 British Honduras.

BRITISH INDIA AND THE EAST.

India.
 Ceylon.
 Straits Settlements and
 Federated Malay States.
 Hong Kong.
 British North Borneo.

OTHER BRITISH POSSESSIONS.

Malta.
 Falkland Islands.

Information concerning India and the Colonies, their commercial products, industries, trade, prospects for emigration, &c., may be obtained on application to the Curators for India and Ceylon, Canada and Cape Colony, at their offices in the Sections, at the Central Stand in the Galleries, at the General Enquiry Office, or enquiries may be addressed in writing to the Director of the Imperial Institute, South Kensington, S.W.

The Scientific and Technical Department.—The laboratories of this Department, which occupy the second floor of the Imperial Institute, were established chiefly with the aid of grants from the Royal Commission of the 1851 Exhibition, in order to provide for the investigation of new or little-known products of India and the Colonies and of known products from new sources, with a view to their utilisation in commerce, and also to provide trustworthy scientific and technical advice on matters connected with the trade and industries of India and the Colonies.

The work of the Department is chiefly initiated by Departments of the Governments of India and the Colonies. Arrangements have been also made by the Foreign Office, whereby British Consuls may transmit to the Department for investigation, such natural products of the countries in which they are appointed to reside as are likely to be of use to British manufacturers and merchants.

Materials are first chemically investigated in the laboratories of the Department, which includes a staff of skilled assistants, and are afterwards submitted to technical trials by experts attached to the Department and finally are commercially valued.

Except under special circumstances the Department does not undertake investigations for private individuals.

A few illustrations of the work of the Department may be given here.

(a) The examination, in the Department, of Indian plants likely to be suitable as vegetable tanning agents now largely in demand, pointed to the conclusion that several would probably be useful to

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European tanners. One of these (*Cæsalpinia digyna*) was submitted to complete chemical investigation with very promising results. Tanning trials were next made on the large scale by one of the tanning experts attached to this Department, whose results confirmed the conclusion that a valuable tanning agent had been found. On the publication of the report on the subject, which was widely noticed in technical journals, a demand almost at once arose for the material in England, on the Continent, and in America, and the authorities in India are now arranging for the commercial supply.

(b) A plant abundant in India (*Podophyllum Emodi*) was found on chemical investigation in the Department to furnish the same constituents as the well-known drug of American origin, *Podophyllum peltatum*. The co-operation of physicians at St. Thomas's Hospital was secured, and preparations of the plant were extensively tried as a drug and found to be as valuable as those made from the American plant. A considerable demand now exists for the plant, which has been officially recognised by the Indian Medical Department, and arrangements are being made in India for a regular commercial supply.

(c) The same practical result has followed from the chemical investigation of a plant abundant in the Egyptian Desert (*Hyoscyamus muticus*) for which a commercial demand as a drug has also arisen.

(d) The quality of the entire series of Indian coals has been experimentally ascertained. These represented the principal coal-seams of India, and the report has been in large request both in this country and in India. It has now been issued as an official paper by the India Office.

(e) The cause of the poisonous effects produced, at certain stages of their growth, on horses and cattle by certain food grains and fodder plants of India and the Colonies has been investigated, and the nature of the poison and the conditions of its occurrence determined.

(f) The chemical composition of india-rubber of various kinds derived from the Colonies which do not at present share in this trade, has been determined experimentally, and on the basis of these results commercial valuations have been obtained, and in some instances sales of consignments of the material have been effected.

(g) Collections of minerals from British Central Africa, from Somaliland, and from Northern and Southern Nigeria have been chemically examined. In certain cases where it seemed desirable, minerals have been subjected to technical trial on the large scale by manufacturers, and commercial quotations for the products

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obtained. Arrangements have also been made, through this Department, for the working of mineral deposits in the Colonies by English firms.

(h) The quality of leather tanned in several of the Colonies has been experimentally investigated, and with the aid of experts its suitability for the English market has been ascertained and suggestions made for its improvement.

(i) The chemical composition of certain oil-yielding nuts sent by British Consuls in Brazil and Portuguese South Africa, and from British Honduras, has been investigated and their properties brought under the notice of British manufacturers and brokers. In several cases arrangements are being made for consignments of the products to be sent to this country.

(j) Scientific and technical information has been supplied as to the curing of tobacco (Bermuda), the working of mica deposits (Somaliland and Southern Nigeria), the suitability of iron ores for smelting (India), the production of wood-pulp (Natal), the cultivation of Indian hemp, and many similar subjects. It will be seen that the results of the work of the Department are often of as much importance to British manufacturers as to the trade of the Colonies concerned.

The principal Technical Reports and Scientific Papers which have emanated from this Department since it was fully established in 1896 are about to be published.

Library and Reading Rooms.—The library and reading rooms of the Imperial Institute contain a large collection of Indian and Colonial works of reference, and are regularly supplied with a number of the principal official publications of India and the Colonies, and with many of the principal newspapers and periodicals of the United Kingdom, India, and the Colonies. The library also includes a number of Indian and Colonial maps and charts.

The library and reading rooms are on the principal floor of the main building, and are entered through the main entrance at the west (Queen's Gate) end of the building. These rooms can at present be used only by Life Fellows of the Imperial Institute, and by persons introduced by them.

Colonial Conference Rooms.—Three large rooms, specially decorated and furnished, are reserved on the principal floor for use by the representatives of the Colonies for meetings and receptions.

The Cowasjee Jehanghier Hall.—The rooms in connection with this Hall are in the occupation of the Indian Committee of the Imperial Institute, whilst the Imperial Institute, the India Office

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and the London University have the right of using the Hall for The
lectures, meetings, &c.

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Unofficial Societies occupying rooms in the Imperial Institute:—

(a) **The Northbrook Society.**—This Society (which was founded by the Earl of Northbrook) has a Library and Reading Room in the Imperial Institute which is available for the use of its members, who have also the privilege of using the adjoining Library and Reading Rooms of the Imperial Institute. The membership of this Society is open to natives of India and to persons officially connected with, or interested in, the Indian Empire. Communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Northbrook Society, Imperial Institute, S.W.

(b) **British Women's Emigration Association.**—The British Women's Emigration Association has been assigned an office on the first floor, which is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and advice and information respecting emigration and the prospects for women in the Colonies may be obtained there free of charge. This Association works in co-operation with the Emigrants Information Office in Westminster.

(c) **Colonial Nursing Association.**—This Association has been assigned an office on the first floor of the Imperial Institute (Room 4). Its principal object is the selection of trained hospital and private nurses for the Crown Colonies and other British Dependencies.