

THE EXHIBITION GALLERIES.

The Galleries are in charge of a Curator, assisted by an assistant Curator, and three exhibition officers.

Re-organisation. On my appointment as Director, I found the Exhibition Galleries closed for receiving and re-arranging some of the exhibits received from Wembley. The Courts were insufficiently lit and were equipped with an antiquated system of electric wiring. They were generally unpleasing in appearance, chiefly owing to the fact that they had not been redecorated for some years through lack of funds. With your consent, I immediately made arrangements for placing contracts for redecoration, reheating and relighting. Although it was originally promised that these works should be completed by May 15th, it was not until the last week in July that the workmen were finally out of the building. This much delayed the work of re-organisation and re-arrangement of the exhibits.

Hitherto, the Galleries had attempted to serve two objectives—as show rooms for the economic products of the Empire for the technical enquirer, and for educative purposes for school children and the general public. The former purpose necessitated the display of products in bulk, which caused overcrowding, accompanied by lengthy descriptive matter in technical language which tended to confuse the lay mind. As the Galleries are open free to the public it is necessary to enclose the exhibits in showcases which does not allow of close and detailed examination of the products themselves. It was therefore decided to relegate the bulk samples to special rooms where the technical enquirer could examine the specimens at leisure and to devote the Galleries themselves entirely to educative purposes. It is hoped to start work on the equipment of these commercial sample rooms early in the New Year.

While the work of re-decoration and improvement was in progress a start was made with the re-arrangement of the exhibits in the galleries and their utilisation in serving the object of education in Empire development. In this connection I feel that I must express my regret that the Empire Exhibition at Wembley had closed down before my appointment and the greater part of most valuable educative material had been dispersed to all parts of the world.