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John Innes Institute Facing Change

The famed John Innes Institute, of Bayfordsbury, England, will in all likelihood lose its present identity, if the recent proposal of its Directors is carried out, according to articles in the Grower and the Gardeners Chronicle. The Institute, in existence for over 50 years, is located 16 miles from London, on 400 acres of land; it has a staff of 70 to 80 scientists and technicians, the finest equipment in the country for the work it is doing, and an excellent library of genetics and horticulture, the areas of research for which it is famous.

The proposal made by the Directors of John Innes is to move the Institute to Norwich, and eventually make it part of the University of East Anglia, which is located nearby. The Directors hope that the change will strengthen the Institute academically, and bring it closer to Agriculture, because the new location is predominantly an agricultural area.

Many members of the staff are opposed to the change. C. D. Darlington, director of the Institute from 1939 to 1953, feels the change would be a big mistake, in view of the enviable record established by the Institute. He suggests that the problems besetting the Institute in recent years could be solved by revising a faulty constitution. The latter has established a governing body which has made bad mistakes because of the divided interests of its members, and due to poor communications among them. Correcting the constitution could save the life of a unique institution which has made valuable to horticulture and genetics simple by permitting more efficient administration.

The British Genetic Institute also voiced disapproval of the proposed change, when it passed a resolution at its last annual meeting, calling upon the Directors of the John Innes Institute to "maintain its integrity in accordance with the purposes for which it was founded."