the giant glaciers and snowfields which wall them in on north, south, and west. A certain livelihood, an ample and cheap food supply, and complete safety have produced a contented race, devoid of ambition and easily ruled. The town-folk are much the same. Kashgar and Yarkand are still great trade centres. Since Marco Polo's day, "from this country many merchants go forth about the world on trading journeys." The old

Pamirs, while Sir Aurel Stein crossed the plateau from east to west, and penetrated to the amazingly interesting regions of Roshan and Darwaz.

The chief interest of this book lies in the fact that it recounts the impressions of a resident in a country which has so far been described only by the passer-by. Even a glimpse of life in the only city of Central Asia where the British Empire retains a representative should commend it to the

FIG. 2.—Cart used in the Osh district. From "Through Deserts and Oases of Central Asia."

silk route ran the length of the country. All trade between China and Western Asia passed through Kashgar.

The volume ends with an account of a visit to the Russian Pamirs. For a long time the "Roof of the World" has been a forbidden land to the English hunter, but the war proved that Russian designs on India were a bogey. The author was permitted to travel and shoot in the heart of the

reader. For years the post has been held by Sir George Macartney. Far removed from the nearest Englishman, cut off from India, isolated and alone, he has upheld the honour of the Empire, using prestige instead of Cossacks, and relying on his unrivalled knowledge of the East. Sir Percy Sykes had his work cut out to fill the gap satisfactorily, but his life experience in Asia served him well, and he has allowed us to see something of it.

The United States National Research Council.

By PROF. VERNON KELLOGG.

THE National Research Council is a co-operative organisation of men of science in America for the special purpose of promoting fundamental research in the physical and natural sciences, the application of scientific knowledge in the industries, and the training of research workers, all for the sake of the general advancement of science and the increase of the national strength and well-being. It was organised in 1916, under the auspices of the National Academy of

Sciences, especially to help make the scientific resources of the country available to the Government in the solution of pressing war-time problems involving scientific investigation. As now reorganised on a permanent peace-time footing, its membership of about 250 is largely composed of duly appointed representatives of about forty major scientific and technical societies of America, with a group of administrative officers and necessary office staffs, resident in Washing-

ton. These officers are appointed for but one year at a time, and it is expected that most of the offices (chairmen of divisions, etc.) will be filled in rotation by men drawn from the scientific faculties of the universities, the staffs of large scientific institutes, and the research laboratories maintained by the industries.

Although during the war the Council was largely supported by the Government, it is now entirely supported by private funds. A gift of 5,000,000 dollars has recently been made to it by the Carnegie Corporation. Part of this money, perhaps a million dollars, will be used to erect a building in Washington for the offices, conference rooms, etc., of the Council and the National Academy of Sciences, and the remainder will constitute a permanent endowment for the Council. This endowment will provide for the administrative expenses of the organisation, leaving the funds necessary to aid in the support of the large co-operative scientific projects of research, which the Council hopes to stimulate or establish, to be found, as the needs require, from wealthy men or philanthropic foundations interested in the promotion of the investigation of the fundamentals of science and from the industries interested in promoting the extension of scientific applications.

The Council as at present organised includes thirteen divisions, seven representing the various major lines of science and technology, and six representing general relations. The first seven are divisions of the physical sciences, engineering, chemistry and chemical technology, geology and geography, the medical sciences, biology and agriculture, and anthropology and psychology. The general relations group includes a division of foreign relations, a Government division (including representatives of each of the major scientific bureaux included in the Government Departments of War, Navy, Commerce, Labour, Agriculture, State, and Treasury), a division of States relations, one of educational relations interested especially in the research conditions and activities in the colleges and universities of the country, a division of research extension especially devoted to the extension of research to the industries, and a research information service intended to act as a general national clearing-house for information concerning the scientific *personnel* and scattered research work of the country.

Affiliated with these various divisions are many special committees and sub-committees which concern themselves with various special phases and specific projects of scientific investigation. The present number of these committees approximates fifty. There is also a special Research Fellowship Board, which has at its disposal through the

period from May 1, 1919, to June 30, 1925, the sum of 500,000 dollars, appropriated by the Rockefeller Foundation for the Maintenance of National Research Fellowships in Physics and Chemistry. Thirteen of these fellowships have so far been instituted.

The National Research Council is thus neither a great operating scientific laboratory nor an organisation possessing large funds from which to make direct gifts to individual scientific investigators or scientific laboratories, but an institution for the purposes of stimulating and organising scientific research in America, and of promoting international scientific relations in all possible ways. It is specially interested in organising scientific effort along co-ordinated co-operative lines. It hopes to encourage vigorous attack on major problems too large and many-sided for the individual investigator working alone, and often requiring the co-operation of numerous investigators and laboratories representing several different but allied lines of science. In the applications of science it is especially interested in such problems as bear directly on the promotion of the national strength and well-being.

Among the many projects now in course of organisation or actual development are an extensive study of food and nutrition in charge of a committee including many of the leading American physiological chemists and experts in human and animal nutrition; a study of high explosives, begun during the war; the preparation of critical compendia of physical and chemical constants; a study of the fundamental scientific problems of baking, of ceramics, of steel alloys, of synthetic drugs, of the chemistry of colloids, of sewage disposal, of forestry, of fertilisers, etc. An extensive investigation of tropical biology, including especially tropical medicine, is in course of organisation. A detailed survey of the research conditions in all the colleges and universities of the country, in which research work is now being done or probably can be done in the near future, is in active progress. A committee on mental measurements has recently completed an elaborate series of trials of group tests on several thousand children, and has prepared, and is about to publish, a set of recommended tests for use for classification and grading in the common schools of the country. These tests are adapted from the sets developed by the Council's special psychological committee on Army tests during the war. Altogether, the Council is getting under way a good deal of important research work, and promises to be an organisation of much influence in the promotion of American activity in the advancement of science.

Obituary.

MARLBOROUGH R. PRYOR.

SOME fifty years ago Marlborough Robert Pryor, who died at Weston Park, Stevenage, on April 3, was well known in scientific circles at Cambridge, and seemed likely to rise to a high

position in those studies. He was a man of many interests and great adaptability of mind, who, though he was rather early diverted to executive business, never lost his interest in those parts of it which were connected with science. Educated

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