Mr. R. E. Turner

By the death of Rowland Edwards Turner on November 29, 1945, at Mossel Bay, Cape Province, at the age of eighty-two, the British Museum (Natural History) has lost a friend who worked voluntarily for the Department of Entomology for more than thirty years. During the First World War, he laboured in the Hymenoptera Room to build up the first arranged national general collections of Braconidæ and of the sphecoid and vespoid families then collectively known as 'Fossorial Hymenoptera'. He soon became a recognized authority on the Thynnidæ and contributed the part of Wytsman's "Genera Insectorum" devoted to that family.

In the inter-war period, Turner spent almost his whole time collecting for the Museum, in tropical Queensland, in western and other parts of Australia, in Assam, but most of all in South Africa. He collected and presented to the Museum more than 850,000 specimens, mostly Hymenoptera but also representatives of Coleoptera and other orders, specializing in the obscurer forms neglected by others. The main mass of this vast collection remains as a priceless store of material for present and future workers to investigate; for, unlike many collectors, Turner took great care that his material should be in the most perfect condition possible. No doubt countless undescribed genera and species are represented in this sample collection, but among the numerous discoveries already made known might be mentioned the new hymenopterous family Dinapsidæ which he discovered in South Africa. Furthermore, he found time to write 125 papers, mostly to describe new genera and species of Fossorial Hymenoptera he had collected himself.

After his mother's death, Turner married her nurse, who now survives him. He was very shy and had an impediment in his speech, but was of such a sweet temperament that he had no unkind words for others, or they for him.

Robert B. Benson.

NEWS and VIEWS

American Academy of Arts and Sciences and International Co-operation

At its January meeting, the Council of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the second oldest learned society in the United States, adopted the following resolution: "Believing that the peace of the world and the advancement of the arts, the sciences, and education in all countries can be effectively furthered by an active support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, the Council of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences congratulates the Senate and House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States upon the several resolutions adopted by them favoring support of this organisation, and urges upon the Congress the desirability of ratifying the charter of the organisation on the basis of the signature of our representatives at the London Conference last November".

Control of Atomic Energy: Chinese Views

Dr. Joseph Needham, of the British Council Cultural and Scientific Office, Chungking, invited representative Chinese bodies to make statements on the use and control of atomic energy. The Chinese Physical Society believes that the United Nations Organisation should appoint a commission on atomic energy to ensure that its applications are developed solely towards peaceful objectives; the proposed commission should organise world-wide inspection, and also an international laboratory, which would be a centre of research on fundamental problems, open to qualified men of science of all nations. The Science Society of China, which is comparable with the British Association in function, deplores the use of atomic energy for weapons of war, and makes the point that, if the benefits of the use of atomic energy are to be extended to all peoples, it is unjustifiable for any nation or group of nations to keep a monopoly on such information. It believes that all knowledge relating to atomic energy should be under the control of the Security Council of the United Nations Organisation. The Natural Science Society of China and the Chinese Association of Scientific Workers point out that the control of atomic energy by individual nations imposes conditions on scientific workers involved which are inimical to freedom of research, expression and communication, and that national direction of such research would hinder development. It is therefore suggested that an international conference to discuss the problem, under the auspices of the Security Council of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, should be summoned as soon as possible; and that a group of men of science of many nations should take part in the control of the application of atomic energy.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation has come one step nearer as a result of the fourth session of the Preparatory Commission held in London during February 11 and 12. Under the chairmanship of Miss Ellen Wilkinson, British Minister of Education, and of Mr. Donald Stone, U.S.A. delegate, the Commission considered a wide field of suggested activities. As at present envisaged, the Organisation consists of the following committees: A, Humanities and Sciences; B, Education; C, Media of Mass Communication; D. Libraries, Museums, Exchanges, Publications, Special Projects; E, Organisation Issues. Some of these committees are subdivided again into sub-committees; thus Committee A has sub-committees on philosophy, arts, social sciences and natural and pure sciences. The sub-committee on natural and pure sciences is to review and make recommendations upon international co-operation in the field of those sciences. The sub-committee on social sciences will be responsible for planning activities, including the interchange of men and ideas, in those sciences, their application to contemporary international problems, the organisation of international study conferences and institutes, etc. Committee B (Education) will deal with matters relating to education at all levels, including adult education. It may be necessary for this committee to establish *ad hoc* sub-committees, but it was felt that in order to emphasize the continuity of the educational process, from the nursery school to the

university and beyond, as much as possible of the planning should be done by the committee as a whole. The Preparatory Commission is still awaiting the ratification, or at least the acceptance, of its charter by a sufficient number of Governments, before the secretariat can move to its permanent headquarters in Paris. Great Britain and Belgium have already accepted the constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, and the United States are expected to do so in the very near future.

A 'UNESCO Month', during which lectures, exhibitions, films, etc., would emphasize the value of international cultural co-operation, has been agreed upon as an important early feature by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation; it is to precede the annual conference which, according to its constitution, the Organisation must arrange every year in a different country. These meetings will be organised to bring about the right atmosphere in the host country, and to provide discussion at the highest level on current intellectual and spiritual problems. The host country would be stimulated to mobilize its best intellectual and artistic resources to enable the Conference to start its proceedings in a spirit attuned to the nature of its task. It is not intended that this 'UNESCO Month' should deal exclusively with the culture of the host country; leading authorities in other countries would no doubt co-operate in this work of international understanding. This scheme, which was put forward by Sir Alfred Zimmern, was approved by the Preparatory Commission. The first 'UNESCO Month' will probably be held in Paris next autumn.

Biological Risks of Atomic Fission

An interesting and possibly very important biological problem has been emphasized by Dr. B. P. Wiesner (*Lancet*, 33, Jan. 5, 1946). Referring to the account of American work on the development of means of using atomic energy for military purposes, written by Prof. H. D. Smyth (H.M. Stationery Office, 1945), Dr. Wiesner points out that the questions involved are not merely political and social, as this report suggests, but are biological problems which cannot be solved by political or social control. The use of nuclear fission on a large scale, even if it be used only for industrial purposes, involves the important biological effects of the intense radioactivity which is produced by nuclear fission. Protective measures were adopted in the American plants, and similar measures will be required if nuclear fission is used for industrial purposes. Dr. Wiesner, however, urges that there are other effects which have not been adequately considered. Radiation may affect the gametes and their development; it does not necessarily prevent spermatogenesis or fertilization, but it may cause early fœtal death. It may also cause genetic changes which have been studied in insects. The possibility of the occurrence of this kind of effect should, Dr. Wiesner urges, be discussed in public and not only by committees of experts briefed by their governments. The public must be allowed to have all the information that any expert can give. It will then be able to decide whether it will allow the application of nuclear fission to industry.

Dr. Wiesner's letter is followed by another by Mr. Kenneth Walker (*Lancet*, 69, Jan. 12, 1946), whose surgical experience and association with Dr. Wiesner in the study of male infertility will ensure adequate consideration of his views. We are, he reminds us, planning to make use of a force which has a profound influence on living tissues and more particularly on the cells responsible for the continuation of the race; and there is no excuse for postponing the study of the effects of this force. Much work has been done on the effects of X-rays and radium on tissue cultures and on the structure of the testes, and on the protection of workers against these effects; but hospitals use only a few milligrams of radium, while the radioactive material produced by nuclear fission will be the equivalent of thousands of grams of radium. Mr. Walker also raises another important and related question. He is not satisfied that the possible reasons for the known high incidence of sub-fertility in otherwise healthy males have been adequately investigated. He finds it difficult to account for this sub-fertility without postulating the existence of some undiscovered factor in our industrial civilization which injures the germ-plasm. He therefore urges that the medical profession should not wait until the industrialists have completed their plans before it starts to study the possible biological consequences of the industrial use of atomic energy. This investigation is surely not a responsibility of the medical profession only. It is a public responsibility of other biologists also to find out whether risks to the continuance of the human race are involved and, if any are, to give the public all the information about them that can be obtained.

Theoretical Physics at Oxford: Prof. M. H. L. Pryce

Prof. M. H. L. Pryce, fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, has been appointed to the newly reconstituted Wykeham chair of theoretical physics in the University of Oxford; he will take up the appointment next Trinity term. Prof. Pryce was educated at Cambridge, and later spent three years at the Institute of Advanced Studies, Princeton, with a Commonwealth fellowship. During the first part of the War he worked under the Admiralty in the Signal Establishment, later being transferred to Montreal to work with the 'Directorate of Tube Alloys'. His publications before the War included papers on non-linear electrodynamics, and Dirac's theory of radiation.

Industrial Metallurgy at Birmingham: Appointment of Dr. Leslie Aitcheson

A chair of industrial metallurgy established at the University of Birmingham has been filled by the appointment of Dr. Leslie Aitcheson. Hitherto, the Department of Metallurgy has been mainly concerned with the production of men trained for research in the subject. Now the position is changing somewhat. To quote from the Vice-Chancellor: "The development of manufacturing processes, recently an art, has now become an exact science and calls for men of the highest ability, who are needed at all levels of the modern manufacturing business, in administration, in all branches of production, management and control. Such men are necessary if the results of research are to be used effectively in the production of metals and alloys of the requisite quality at an economic price". Such men would have the same basic training as those intended for research as a career, but in addition they must be introduced to aspects of manufacture that have not hitherto been dealt with in degree courses in metallurgy. Dr. Aitcheson, who was educated at the University of Sheffield, has had wide practical experience, having