

NEWS and VIEWS

Science in the U.S.S.R.

IN his presidential address to the Royal Society, delivered on November 30 (see p. 872), Sir Robert Robinson refers to the restrictions which have been placed on biological teaching and research in the U.S.S.R. Also simultaneously, his predecessor in the presidential chair of the Royal Society, Sir Henry Dale, has resigned his honorary membership of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., because, as he says in a letter to the president of that Academy, "I believe that I should do a dis-service even to my scientific colleagues in the U.S.S.R. if I were to retain an association in which I might appear to condone the actions by which your Academy, under whatever compulsion, is now responsible for such a terrible injury to the freedom and the integrity of Science". In his announcement of his resignation, Sir Henry recalls that his election took place while he was president of the Royal Society, and that it was widely welcomed among British scientific men "as the symbol of a community of purpose between the scientists of our two nations . . . in defending, as we believed, the freedom of Science, as of all man's proper activities, from the threat of an aggressive tyranny". He points out that in the same year, 1942, N. I. Vavilov was elected a foreign member of the Royal Society in recognition of his contribution, by research in the U.S.S.R., to advances in genetics. But Vavilov had fallen into disfavour, and even now the Royal Society does not know whether he was alive at the time of his election to foreign membership. "More recent events, of which full reports have come to hand, have made it clear what has happened. The late N. I. Vavilov had been replaced by T. D. Lysenko, the advocate of a doctrine of evolution which, in effect, denies all the progress made by research in that field since Lamarck's speculations appeared early in the nineteenth century. Though Darwin's work is still formally acknowledged in the U.S.S.R., his essential discovery is now to be rejected there. The whole great fabric of exact knowledge, still growing at the hands of those who have followed Mendel, Bateson and Morgan, is to be repudiated and denounced; and the last few, who were still contributing to it in the U.S.S.R., have now been deprived of position and opportunity. This is not the result of an honest and open conflict of scientific opinions; Lysenko's own claim and statements make it clear that his dogma has been established and enforced by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, as conforming to the political philosophy of Marx and Lenin. . . . It remains to be seen whether such compliance with dogma is to be exacted in other departments of Science. So far as we know only that of the genetics encouraged by Lenin is now prohibited as alien to his political philosophy."

Dr. H. J. Muller, the distinguished American geneticist, has also resigned his honorary membership of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.

Royal Society : Officers for 1949

AT the anniversary meeting of the Royal Society on November 30, the following were elected as officers and council for the ensuing year: *President*, Sir Robert Robinson; *Treasurer*, Sir Thomas Merton; *Secretaries*, Sir Edward Salisbury and Prof. D. Brunt; *Foreign Secretary*, Prof. E. D. Adrian; *Other Members*

of Council, Prof. J. D. Bernal, Prof. G. R. Cameron, Sir James Chadwick, Prof. S. Chapman, Prof. H. Davenport, Sir Frank Engledow, Prof. W. E. Garner, Prof. A. C. Hardy, Dr. C. H. Kellaway, Prof. G. F. Marrian, Sir William Stanier, Dr. H. G. Thornton, Prof. C. E. Tilley, Dr. A. E. Trueman, Prof. S. Zuckerman.

British Association : Newcastle Meeting, 1949

NEXT year the British Association for the Advancement of Science will meet in Newcastle-upon-Tyne (August 31–September 7). The Council has completed appointments to the various offices in the Association; these include: *President*, Sir John Russell; *General Treasurer*, M. G. Bennett; *General Secretaries*, Dr. Edward Hindle and Sir Richard Southwell; *Presidents of Sections*, Sir Harold Spencer Jones (Physics and Mathematics); Sir Alfred Egerton (Chemistry); Prof. W. J. Pugh (Geology); Prof. A. C. Hardy (Zoology); Prof. L. Dudley Stamp (Geography); Sir Alexander Gray (Economics); Sir Arthur Fleming (Engineering); Mr. M. C. Burkitt (Anthropology and Archæology); Prof. R. A. Peters (Physiology); Prof. Godfrey H. Thomson (Psychology); Prof. Lily Newton (Botany); Sir Fred Clarke (Education); Prof. N. M. Comber (Agriculture). The chairman of the Local Executive Committee is Lord Eustace Percy. The Lord Mayor of Newcastle has issued an appeal for a local fund of £4,000, and more than two hundred local volunteers are already making preparations for what is expected to be one of the largest meetings in the history of the British Association.

Unesco : New Director General

AT the Third General Conference of Unesco now being held in Beirut, M. Jaime Torres Bodet, Mexican Foreign Minister, has been elected director general in succession to Dr. Julian Huxley, who has held office since the inception of Unesco two years ago. M. Bodet, who is forty-six years of age, was head of the library department of the Mexican Ministry of Education during 1922–24. From 1924 until 1928, he was professor of French literature in the University of Mexico. In 1929 he entered the Foreign Service and successively held positions in Mexican legations in Spain, Holland and France. During 1936–37 he was director of the Diplomatic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the following two years he spent as *chargé d'affaires* in Brussels. From 1940 until 1943 he was Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, after which he was appointed Minister of Education. In this capacity he conducted a campaign against illiteracy, founded circulating libraries, organised a system of rural education, and devoted his whole time to the orientation and administration of education in Mexico.

Bicentenary of Berthollet

CLAUDE LOUIS BERTHOLLET, the associate of Lavoisier and himself a distinguished chemist, was not a native of France but was born at Talloires, near Annecy, in Savoy, on December 9, 1748. He was educated at Chambéry and at Turin. After taking his doctor's degree at the latter place he became physician to Philip, Duke of Orleans, in which capacity he made a name for himself as a chemical discoverer. In 1781 he was made a member of the Academy of Sciences of Paris and afterwards became director of the Government dye works. His discovery of the