

NEWS and VIEWS

National Physical Laboratory Standards of Radioactive Isotopes

DR. E. C. BULLARD, director of the National Physical Laboratory, has issued the following announcement: "The National Physical Laboratory has at present the main responsibility for standards of certain radioactive isotopes in Great Britain. It is proposing to issue standards of these isotopes at regular intervals to meet the needs of those whose use of such materials justifies absolute standards and to supplement the normal calibrations which can be obtained on request from the Atomic Energy Research Establishment, Harwell. Standards of iodine-131, based on the British Standard (see *Nature*, 170, 916; 1952) for this isotope, will be issued on or about October 15, 1953. Future issues will take place twice-yearly in mid-April and mid-October. The iodine-131 standards will be in the form of sealed ampoules of solution. Two different levels of activity will be available, one of 1 millicurie in 1 ml. of solution and one of 100 microcuries in 4 ml. of solution. Issues of standards of phosphorus-32 (100 microcuries in 4 ml. of solution) are planned to take place on June 15 and December 1, 1953. Applications for these standards should reach the National Physical Laboratory not later than a fortnight before the appropriate date of issue, and should include a statement of the purposes for which the standards are required. A fee of £10 will be charged for each 1-millicurie standard and of £5 for each 100-microcurie standard. It is requested that applicants should make their own arrangements for the collection of their standards from the Laboratory. An announcement relating to the issue of cobalt-60 standards will be made in the near future."

Research in Coal Mining: Dr. L. C. Tyte

THE National Coal Board has appointed Dr. L. C. Tyte to be director of its second Central Research Establishment at Isleworth, Middlesex, which is engaged on investigations of the underground problems of the industry. Dr. Tyte will be responsible to the Director-General of Research, Dr. W. Idris Jones, at headquarters. Dr. Tyte, who is forty-six, was educated at Queen Mary College, University of London, where he carried out research under Prof. C. H. Lees. Later he joined the Government Scientific Service at the Research Department at Woolwich Arsenal and latterly has been engaged on projectile research. He was promoted deputy chief scientific officer in 1950 and was technical director under Sir William Penney at the Monte Bello trial.

Wigan and District Mining and Technical College

THE Wigan and District Mining and Technical College, now in its ninety-sixth session, celebrated Founders' Day for the first time for fifteen years on March 25, when Sir Hubert Houldsworth, chairman of the National Coal Board, was the chief speaker. Sir Hubert, who paid tribute to the work of the College in providing leaders in many industries, referred to the scholarship scheme of the National Coal Board. Although Great Britain is suffering, among other things, from an insufficiency of qualified technical men, the Board is unable to find sufficient candidates for its hundred scholarships each year, although those selected have done well. Sir Hubert referred in particular to the desirability of more applications from those leaving school with a lean-

ing towards physics, chemistry, mathematics and geology. Although many of the key positions in the industry are filled to-day by those who had no previous connexion with mining, he believes that a restricted mentality towards mining in schools outside the mining areas may be hindering recruitment. Emphasizing the need for attracting more men and the opportunity for those who have had their scientific—and preliminary—training at such a college or at a university, Sir Hubert welcomed the contribution of the Wigan Mining College to training for leadership for other industries. More than technical skill is required if the efficiency of the mining industry, or others, is to be raised and the lag between discovery or invention and application to practical purposes reduced. Besides technical knowledge, integrity, boldness in conception and soundness in judgment, leadership in industry demands interest in and understanding of human beings. Sir Hubert also stressed the importance of watching for originality and seeing that it is given full scope, particularly in research, and concluded by stressing the need for inculcating a spirit of service to the whole community.

In his report as principal, Dr. E. C. Smith said that, since Founders' Day was last celebrated, the number of students has increased from about 1,800 to some 3,000. Evening students have tended to decrease in numbers; but those attending on part-time day release have increased continuously from 220 in 1938 to 1,200. Such co-operation is specially marked with the National Coal Board. Full-time students have increased from 155 to more than 400. Dr. Smith referred to the extent to which the College has supplied training in technical teaching and administration to those who have since become heads of technical colleges or departments elsewhere, and stated that more officials of the National Coal Board have been trained at Wigan than at any other technical college or university in the country. The College library provides a first-rate service not only for the staff and students of the College, but also for research workers within the field covered, and the Manchester Geological and Mining Society now has its headquarters at the College.

Technical Resources of Industrial Firms

IN reply to a question in the House of Commons on March 31, Mr. A. H. E. Molson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works, representing the Lord President of the Council, stated that the Manchester Joint Research Council's survey of the technical resources of industrial firms is complete, and that the Council is preparing a report for possible publication. The Department of Engineering Production in the University of Birmingham is continuing its survey under a research contract with the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. A pilot survey of the technical resources of industrial firms in two small selected areas has been carried out by the Social Survey; but it is not proposed to publish a report of this survey. Mr. Molson added that the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research is considering the preparation of a general paper covering all three surveys.

Scientific Instruments of George III

A COLLECTION of more than three hundred and fifty scientific instruments and pieces of apparatus was made for the instruction of George III (1738-1820), when a youth, and was afterwards used for the