

COTTON FOR GERMAN AMMUNITION.

THE appointment of Mr. Lloyd George as Minister of Munitions is a sign that the reconstituted Government has at length realised the serious importance of ammunition in warfare. The complement of Mr. George's work will now surely be the exclusion of materials of ammunition from our enemies. It is now many months since Mr. Runciman, President of the Board of Trade, whose special mission was to deal with commerce with the enemy, was implored to place cotton and cotton goods on the list of contraband; it was urged that only by this course could the German troops be deprived of ammunition. But the attitude of mind which induced Mr. Runciman, some years ago, in criticising Lord Roberts' efforts to bring the nation to apprehend the danger which menaced us, to wish to "apologise to our good friends the Germans," appeared to have persisted. After much pressure, the Order in Council of March 14 was issued, apparently excluding cotton. The effect was nil. Cotton still poured into Germany, as appeared from returns chronicled in the *Times* of June 10, in answer to a Parliamentary question, where enormous increases in the exports of cotton and yarns into Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands in the figures for April, 1915, over those for April, 1914, were reported. Imports might have been stopped at once had cotton been declared contraband of war.

It is to be regarded as most unfortunate that Sir Edward Grey, in his letter to Dr. Page on January 14, gave the promise: "His Majesty's Government have never put cotton on the list of contraband; they have throughout the war kept it on the free list; and on every occasion, when questioned on the point, they have stated their intention of adhering to the practice." It is not going too far to say that this decision has, and will, cost Britain and her Allies many thousands of lives.

The supreme tragedy of this war is that while the patriotic and unselfish citizens of the Empire are risking all to save the world from German domination, our Government has been contributing to their destruction. To fight the enemy abroad is necessary, and calls for the utmost exertion of the manliest of our race; but to have to fight an enemy at home leads us to despair of victory. Even yet, cotton is entering Germany; and I learn from French sources that African wood ("ogoubi") and Norwegian wood pulp are being tried by the Germans as substitutes. These must all be declared contraband; that step, and that step alone, will deal a final blow to the enemy.

WILLIAM RAMSAY.

MR. F. H. NEVILLE, F.R.S.

BY the death, in his sixty-eighth year, of Mr. F. H. Neville, at Letchworth, on June 5, the scientific world, and metallurgists in particular, have to mourn the loss of a singularly gifted man and a most charming personality. Neville took his degree in the Mathematical

Tripos of 1871, when he was bracketed fifteenth wrangler. He was elected a Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, in the same year. The bent of his mind was, however, in the direction of experimental science rather than mathematics, and early in 1880 he took over the management of the chemical laboratory at his college.

About 1888, the work of Raoult on the lowering of the freezing points of solutions was brought prominently into notice, and it occurred to Neville and Mr. C. T. Heycock to see if the same laws applied to metallic solutions. A first paper was read before the Chemical Society on June 3, 1889, on the lowering of the freezing point of tin by the addition of other metals, in which it was shown that, as regards a metal like tin, the effect of dissolving other metals was generally the same, so far as the freezing point was concerned, as in the case of aqueous and other solutions. After the first paper was published, more extended experiments were made, great trouble being caused by the rapid shift of zero of the mercury thermometers. With the assistance of Prof. Callendar and Principal E. H. Griffiths, Neville and Heycock were able to use the platinum resistance pyrometer, and from that time the thermal work was comparatively rapid and accurate. The investigations on alloys were continued with but slight intervals up to the autumn of last year, but by far the heaviest piece of work, both thermal and microscopical, was on the alloys of tin and copper; this formed the subject of the Bakerian Lecture.

In 1897 Neville was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. No one knows better than the present writer how large a part Neville took in all the researches with which he was jointly associated, or how he could bring a mind trained in mathematical precision to bear on his scientific work. Only those who have dealt with the complex problems of alloys can appreciate the difficulty of disentangling the maze of experimental results and sifting out the good from the worthless, and so preventing the main problem from getting side-tracked.

Those who had the privilege of knowing Neville well were aware that he was a man of many gifts and wide reading—an excellent French, German, and Italian scholar, an authority on Italian history, and deeply interested in metaphysical speculations.

A more modest man, or one who had less push, in the worldly sense, it would be impossible to find. His death has left a deep gap, which his friends know well they will never be able to fill.

NOTES.

IN reply to a question asked in the House of Commons on June 14, it was announced that the Board of Trade had decided to dispense with the wool test for colour-blindness from January 1 next.

MR. J. B. TYRRELL, of Toronto, was elected president of the Geological Section of the Royal Society of Canada at its annual meeting held in Ottawa on May 25-27.