

the Anti-Noise League and is being held at the Science Museum, South Kensington, during this month. The opening ceremony was held in the lecture theatre, and was attended by some two hundred guests. The chair was taken by Lord Horder, chairman of the Council of the Anti-Noise League. Mr. MacDonald in his speech opening the exhibition said that formerly a person who confessed that he was troubled by noise was put down as an irreparable crank; but now it is rightly regarded that noise is something that ought not to be tolerated by any decent man or woman. He suggested that their campaign against nerve jarring should be regarded as a great movement in æstheticism. It is the duty of all to co-ordinate in the protection of life from jars of the eye and the nerves—jars of the complete human personality. Sir Henry Richards, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Anti-Noise League, in moving a vote of thanks to the Prime Minister, said that the League is an educational body and the exhibition is intended to show to the public the means of escape from noise. The Prime Minister made a short tour of the exhibition and inspected among other things a silenced pneumatic road-drill, a silenced motor-cycle engine, a ripple tank illustrating the behaviour of sound-waves from a speaker in the House of Commons and several models demonstrating the scientific principles of the reduction of noise from machinery and in buildings.

The Health of Sunderland and County Durham

DR. G. F. WALKER, of Sunderland, in a letter to *The Times* last December, made an appeal that the deterioration of health of a section of the population in Sunderland and adjacent districts in County Durham, where unemployment has been severe and prolonged, was serious, and deserved more national consideration. In consequence of statements made in Dr. Walker's letter, the Ministry of Health instituted an inquiry by Dr. Pearse, Ministry of Health, Dr. Glover, Board of Education, and Mr. Grant, Ministry of Health, whose report has now been issued ("Report of an Inquiry into the Effects of Existing Economic Circumstances on the Health of the Community in the County Borough of Sunderland and certain districts of County Durham. London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1935. 9d. net). The matter of this report is too lengthy to quote in detail, but is summarised in the concluding paragraph. While admitting that there may be some slight deterioration of health and small increase in the incidence of certain diseases, the investigators state that "We are unable to accept Dr. Walker's statement that there has been in this area a 'substantial and progressive deterioration in public health'".

Technological Advances of the Past Twenty-five Years

SIR FRANK SMITH, secretary of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, spoke on June 3 at a special Jubilee luncheon, held under the auspices of the Society of Engineers, on "Some Significant Technological Achievements of the King's Reign". Sir Frank dealt with four outstanding types of achievement of the period. The first was the advances

in medicine which have prolonged our lives; the second was the more complete harnessing of the electron, an achievement which has given birth to industries unknown in 1910; the third was the fixation of nitrogen, an achievement which has overthrown the menace to our food supplies resulting from diminishing quantities of Chile nitrate; and finally, the production of new steel cutting tools, which has largely affected mechanisation, the price of manufactured goods and the leisure of man. Speaking of the industrial applications arising from the discovery of the electron, and the researches of Sir J. J. Thomson and Lord Rutherford and others on the structure of the atom and on matter in general, Sir Frank said: "When the King came to the throne there was not one listener in the world, for there was no broadcasting station. To-day in this country alone there are over 7 million people with licensed receivers. There are millions of thermionic valves in use, and on his Jubilee day the King spoke via millions of thermionic valves to hundreds of millions of his subjects. The radio engineer was in charge, and by the simple operation of switches, millions and millions of electrons played the parts arranged for them beforehand." The turnover in the radio broadcasting industry, which did not exist twenty-five years ago, was more than 20 millions sterling last year. The harnessing of the electron has been, in Sir Frank's opinion, one of the greatest achievements of the King's reign. It enables one person to speak to and be heard by the whole of the civilised world; it has increased entertainment and amusement through the 'talkies', and it has enabled our homes, our roads and our public buildings to be illuminated in a manner which many would have thought impossible twenty-five years ago.

British Standards Institution

THE annual meeting of the British Standards Institution was held on May 28, with Dr. E. F. Armstrong in the chair, who, in presenting the report, said the year's work showed marked progress in every section. He laid stress on the fact that more than 150,000 copies of the British Standard Specifications have been sold and distributed during the year, an increase over last year of 23,000, and that there are now 700 committees holding more than 1,000 meetings a year, the total membership exceeding 5,000. The machinery of the B.S.I. is such that no section of industry need fear that its considered views will not receive the fullest consideration, or that a British Standard Specification would be issued in the face of soundly based objection. Moreover, it has been definitely stated that the Institution does not contemplate setting itself up as a testing authority. Mr. W. Reavell, a past-president of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, has been elected chairman for the ensuing year. He was one of the first to recognise the necessity for the co-ordination of the work of mechanical standardisation, in which the Institution of Mechanical Engineers is taking a leading part. Perhaps one of the most important results of the year's work is the increasing success of the inter-Imperial co-operation which is now so firmly