

News and Views

Sir Archibald Geikie (1835-1924)

THE centenary of the birth of Sir Archibald Geikie falls on December 28 this year; it is a fitting occasion to remind older geologists of what many of them owed to him during their earlier years for his teaching and writings, and to direct the attention of younger geologists to the changes that have come over the science since Geikie began his labours. It was his good fortune to take up geology when major principles still required documentation and exposition; he devoted much attention to the significance of denudation in the shaping of existing forms of land surface and to the results of volcanic activity, and in pursuit of field evidence travelled extensively in Europe and North America. Possessed of a logical mind, great industry and a lucid and dignified prose style—which gave him pleasure to employ—he early assumed and continued during his life to occupy a leading position as an exponent of physical geology. During his tenure of office as director-general of the Geological Survey of the United Kingdom he secured opportunities for a considerable literary output, including the compilation of his great textbook, first published in 1882, which after several revisions is still in use, but how different from its successors with their lavish employment of photographic reproductions. Sir Archibald corresponded freely with his geological contemporaries abroad, worthily maintaining the status of British geology, and he received generous recognition from many foreign societies. He took an active part in the administration of scientific institutions, and held the presidency of the Royal Society in 1904 and of the British Association in 1892; but it was as a writer of readable geological literature that he earned the appreciation both of the serious student and the general reader, and made thereby an indelible mark on his epoch.

Education and Administration among Backward Peoples

IN another column of this issue of NATURE (see p. 1003) it is suggested in discussing 'indirect rule' of native peoples in Africa that the anthropological approach to problems of native administration is open to the danger of taking too conservative a view in the attempt to regulate the effects of cultural contacts. How this is to be avoided, without at the same time impairing the lessons of anthropological study, is the main thesis of an essay by Mr. F. C. Williams, Government anthropologist of the Territory of Papua, which was awarded the Wellcome Medal for Anthropological Research by the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1933 ("The Blending of Cultures: an Essay on the Aims of Native Education": Territory of Papua, Anthropology, Report No. 16. Government Printer, Port Moresby, Pp. 46. 1s.). Mr. Williams, whose conclusions, necessarily, are largely coloured by his experience in Papua, points out that, rightly regarded, the problems of native education

and native administration are one. Education, thus understood, he maintains is a process of three operations, or "tasks":—maintenance, fostering necessary or desirable elements in native culture; expurgation, eliminating undesirable elements, such as sorcery, cannibalism and head-hunting; and expansions, which, while recognising that change is inevitable, seek to guide it by the incorporation of progressive elements which native culture is ready to assimilate, as, for example, improved methods in horticulture. It will be noted that this throws upon the administration the responsibility of formulating a 'blend' of cultures, which is both conservative and progressive, and will not prove detrimental to native character and morale. This demands an intensive study of native culture, but at the same time one which the successful administration of native affairs in Papua has shown to be not impossible.

The Outlook for Consumers

UNDER this title, P.E.P. (Political and Economic Planning) issues a broadsheet, No. 63, which should interest everyone, because all the world is a consumer and comparatively few are producers or distributors. We all think that we suffer, at times, from the greed or petty dishonesty of those who stand on the other side of the counter, yet for the most part we grin and bear it, taking little thought of the methods that might be used to give us value for our money. Fundamentally, the problem is the one that is penetrating ever more deeply into the social conscience, namely, how the proceeds of useful human labour should be apportioned equitably among producers, distributors and consumers. Some are convinced that the principle now ruling is that of the jungle—sweets to the sweet and the hindmost to the devil—and that pending the time when men are educated morally to the same degree as some are now educated intellectually, the only solution is the total elimination of 'profit' in the Marxian sense, or drastic regulation of profits, as now practised in certain Continental countries.

OTHERS, however—and P.E.P. is apparently among them—assume that, in the main, what was, will be, and that desirable changes can or should be effected only on the basis of the existing order: evolution rather than revolution. It is from the latter point of view that the authors of the broadsheet approach the subject of consumers' interests, and after laying down that, as a rule, the buyer gets what he deserves, and that to effect any useful change he must stir himself and co-operate with his fellows, they proceed to enumerate and discuss five possible ways in which the consumer can assist himself or be assisted. One way of helping the consumer is to improve the shops. For several reasons, the old personal relationship