

the Training College in 1901 after forty-four years' service. His country recognised his work by giving him, in 1902, a Civil List pension of £100 a year. He died on August 18, 1907, three months before Lord Kelvin, in his eighty-third year.

Dr. Kerr was a well-built man, over six feet in height, of attractive and lovable personality. The late Prof. Andrew Gray wrote of him: "The name of this quiet and unostentatious teacher and

experimentalist will be linked for all time with that of Faraday. He would not himself have desired any better immortality"; and Prof. Magnus Maclean, who had been a student under Kerr and is still with us, said at Kerr's retirement: "No one could have passed through Dr. Kerr's class without observing and being influenced by the singular simplicity, the sincerity and the loveliness of his character".

## The Draft Poisons List and Poison Rules

### The Chemical Manufacturer and the Chemist

#### Interpretation of the Rules

THE report of the Poisons Board together with the draft Poisons List and Poison Rules, which was discussed in NATURE of June 22, p. 1013, raises a number of questions of detail of interest to many besides the pharmacist. The more important of these questions are those which affect the chemical manufacturer particularly, and those which concern the profession of chemistry as a whole.

The first set of questions was considered at a meeting convened by the Association of British Chemical Manufacturers on July 4, which was attended by Mr. M. D. Perrins, secretary of the Poisons Board, to discuss the interpretation of the draft Poisons List and Rules. At the outset, Mr. Perrins pointed out that the only real distinction between Part I and Part II of the Poisons List, that between poisons which can be sold by retail to the general public by authorised sellers of poisons, that is, by registered pharmacists, and those which can be so sold only by listed sellers and authorised sellers of poisons, does not affect the sales with which the chemical manufacturer is concerned. The distinction between substances in the First Schedule and those which are not is, generally speaking, that those in the First Schedule have various restrictions applied to them, such as that the purchaser must be known to the seller and a record must be kept. On the other hand, for practical purposes, the only restriction on substances not in the First Schedule is that they must be labelled in accordance with the Act and Rules and they must be in the type of container required by the Rules.

Mr. Perrins also pointed out that preparations sold by manufacturers to doctors or veterinary surgeons more or less in bulk do not come under the heading of medicines 'made up ready', and

emphasised that the Rules are to be administered by those who could be trusted to act with common-sense. The view taken in the report of the Departmental Committee is that the control of poisons is such an intricate and complicated matter, so liable to change, that it is impossible to deal with it by restrictions set out in an Act of Parliament. Much elasticity is necessary and questions of control must be dealt with by regulations which can be altered from time to time. Should it be found, for example, that these Rules work harshly on the trade in a particular raw material which does not in practice afford any danger to anyone, a fact which may have been overlooked, then that can be dealt with by a Rule adding it to the general exemptions or special exemptions as may be required.

In the discussion which followed, a number of points were raised in regard to the detailed interpretation of the Rules. It was emphasised that there are no responsibilities placed on the manufacturer as to whom he sells poisons, provided he does not sell them by retail to members of the public.

The question of abbreviated names was raised, the abbreviations used in the British Pharmacopœia being regarded as official, and it was suggested that the Association should recommend that the ordinary abbreviated names used in the trade should be considered to be accepted scientific names, a proposal which will not commend itself to the profession of chemistry generally. Various questions relating to transport and labelling were raised, but as the Report itself emphasises, the Board does not propose to include any industrial poisons in the List solely on the ground of the possibility of danger arising during transit, in view of the rules to be issued under the Petroleum

(Consolidation) Act, 1925, for the control of the transport by road of dangerous liquids and liquefiable gases.

It was pointed out that as Rule 20(a) stands, analytical laboratories which cannot claim to be engaged in education or research must have their bottles fluted, and it was suggested that samples used in examinations do not constitute supply and accordingly need not be specially labelled.

The second set of questions has been raised in a letter in *The Times* of July 6 by Prof. E. C. C. Baly and relates to the qualifications to be possessed by those authorised to supervise or control the manufacture of poisons and particularly to the nature of the prescribed qualification in chemistry. Prof. Baly points out that in Paragraph 65 of its Report, the Board, after recommending that the control of the manufacture of pharmaceutical preparations for the internal treatment of human ailments should be restricted to registered pharmacists, medical practitioners, fellows and associates of the Institute of Chemistry, and persons who have been continuously engaged in the control of the manufacture of pharmaceutical preparations for a period of three years, makes the erroneous statement that there is in Great Britain no recognised body other than the Institute of Chemistry that issues certificates or other documentary evidence of competency in chemistry as such. Not only does the British Association of Chemists issue such documentary evidence but also the universities, and the Report refers to

university degrees and diplomas in such a way as to suggest that a university degree does not confer competency in chemistry as such.

Prof. Baly also directs attention to the suggestion in the Report that the societies named are included because they can exercise disciplinary action by removing a name of a member guilty of unprofessional conduct. Exactly the same action can be exercised by the British Association of Chemists, and Prof. Baly emphasises that the statements in the Report are the more unacceptable to a large body of chemical opinion because the Institute of Chemistry does not represent more than 40 per cent of the chemists in Great Britain.

In a reply in *The Times* of July 11, Sir Gerald Bellhouse points out that the proposed rule only applies to the manufacture of pharmaceutical preparations for the purposes of the internal treatment of human ailments, and not to the manufacture of the ingredients of the composition. The statement regarding the Institute of Chemistry, challenged by Prof. Baly, was primarily a reference to the fact that the Institute of Chemistry is the only institution connected with the profession of chemistry which has acquired the right, granted by Royal Charter, to confer definite qualifications in chemistry. The Board's recommendations in regard to the supervision of manufacture should be considered in regard to all the various legal and administrative questions set out in Paragraph 65 of its Report.

## Norwich Meeting of the British Association

### Final Programme

THE full programme of the Norwich meeting of the British Association should be in the hands of members next week, if they have intimated intention to be present. The programme has taken shape no less effectively than usual out of the general plans which were prepared at the meetings of organising sectional committees in January last. There is no doubt that the now regular practice of calling all these committees to meet early in the year on one day and in one place (recently, Birkbeck College, London) is the most successful administrative reform introduced into the working of the Association in recent years. It has had a notable effect upon the co-ordination of the final programme, which was urged as desirable in the columns of *NATURE* shortly after

the Association had resumed its post-War activities. It is due to the memory of the late general treasurer, Dr. E. H. Griffiths, to associate his name with this exceedingly valuable measure: he introduced it.

The subjects of the presidential addresses have been indicated in an earlier notice (*NATURE*, May 11, p. 778). They range as usual from strictly technical essays in the pure sciences to those to which the layman will listen with ease, such as that of Dr. Pickard-Cambridge under the provocative title of "Education and Freedom". Some of the addresses will introduce discussions in their Sections: examples are that of Prof. W. N. Haworth on the molecular structure of carbohydrates, Prof. F. Balfour-Browne's on the