

News and Views

President Masaryk

It was announced in Prague on December 14 that Prof. T. G. Masaryk, who has been president of the Czechoslovakian Republic since its foundation in 1918, has tendered his resignation. Prof. Masaryk was sixty-eight years of age when he returned to Prague at the end of the Great War and now, at the advanced age of eighty-five years, after guiding the destinies of the nation for seventeen years, he has expressed a wish to retire. Some time back he was taken ill with eye trouble and rheumatism, but he made a remarkable recovery and resumed duties and especially his reading of current scientific literature. During the Great War, Masaryk held a professorship at King's College, London, but his educational work receded as his powers as a statesman came to be recognised and utilised. His own efforts to secure the independence of Czechoslovakia were realised on October 28, 1918. Masaryk's long career has been a continual series of struggles in the interest of truth, both in science and in affairs. He began life as an apprentice to a locksmith but, through the efforts of his schoolmaster, continued his education at Brno Grammar School and the University of Vienna where, in 1878, he was awarded the Ph.D. degree.

MASARYK's first philosophical work was "Suicide as a Social Phenomenon of the Present Day" (1881) and it secured for him a Vienna lectureship. In the following year he obtained a professorship at Prague, where at first the 'lonely Slovak' did not make many friends, and his scepticism (justified as investigation proved) of the genuineness of some old Czech manuscripts brought him much abuse. From his philosophical studies he was led to the formation of a 'Realist' movement. "Realism," he declared, "is an attempt to popularise the whole realm of science and philosophy. Without distorting scientific exactitude, realism strives to render science accessible to every class of the people. It is a protest against the monopoly of learning, its endeavour is to socialise scientific and philosophical culture." He married a distinguished American, Miss Charlotte Garrigue, in 1878, incorporating her name with his own. She entered ardently into all Masaryk's work until her death in 1923. They paid several visits together to England, America and Russia, and his wife undoubtedly helped him in the compilation of his philosophical works, especially when he was editor of the scientific section of the Prague daily, *Národní Listy*. Just before the Great War he wrote "Russia and Europe", one of the most important books on the subject, showing as it did the true state of the great Slav country and the directions in which affairs were drifting. His post-War books include "The Making of a State" (1927) and "Les Problèmes de la

Democratie" (1924). He was also instrumental in the establishment of the Masaryk Academy of Work, which is concerned with the fostering of research, especially in such branches of applied science as chemical technology. Many valuable original memoirs have been published through the help of this Academy.

Tercentenary of Champlain

ON December 25 the tercentenary occurs of the death of Samuel de Champlain, the French explorer who founded Quebec, and was the first governor of Canada. Born in 1567 at the village of Brouage in the ancient province of Saintonge, now the Department of Charente-Inférieure, he served in the wars of the League under Henry IV, but after a voyage to the West Indies, he was placed in charge of an expedition to continue the work of Jacques Cartier, the discoverer of the St. Lawrence. On May 24, 1603, Champlain anchored in that river, and for the next four years was engaged on exploring the Bay of Fundy and other parts. A visit to France was followed by another expedition, and in July 1608 he founded the settlement which he named Quebec. Thence he made a journey up the Richelieu, and discovered and explored the lake which bears his name. Other explorations took him to the western shores of Lake Huron and to Ottawa. Again in France in 1620, he returned with his family and with a commission as governor of the new settlement. About seven years later, owing to the outbreak of war between France and England, his supplies were cut off, and Quebec had to be surrendered. After the declaration of peace, however, in 1633, he was again able to return, and it was in Quebec that he died. He wrote accounts of his voyages, and these were republished in Quebec in 1870.

British Association: Officers for 1936

THE annual meeting of the British Association will be held next year in Blackpool on September 9-16 under the presidency of Sir Josiah Stamp. The following sectional presidents have been appointed: Section A (Mathematical and Physical Sciences), Prof. A. Ferguson; B (Chemistry), Prof. J. C. Philip; C (Geology), Prof. H. L. Hawkins; D (Zoology), Dr. Julian Huxley; E (Geography), Brig. H. S. L. Winterbotham; F (Economic Science and Statistics), Dr. C. R. Fay; G (Engineering), Prof. W. Cramp; H (Anthropology), Miss D. A. E. Garrod; I (Physiology), Prof. R. J. S. McDowall; J (Psychology), Mr. A. W. Wolters; K (Botany), Mr. J. Ramsbottom; L (Educational Science), Sir Richard Livingstone; M (Agriculture), Prof. J. Hendrick. The president of the Conference of Delegates of Corresponding Societies will be Dr. A. B. Rendle.