

News and Views

Mr. H. N. Ridley, C.M.G., F.R.S.

MR. H. N. RIDLEY, the well-known Malayan botanist and director of the Gardens, Straits Settlements, 1888–1911, was eighty years of age on December 10, 1935, and Part 1 of vol. 9 of *The Gardens' Bulletin* (Govt. Printing Office, Singapore, Dec. 20, 1935) has been dedicated to him. Mr. Ridley did more than any other individual to add to the knowledge of the flora of the Malay Peninsula: his "Flora" is the foundation for all later work. It was in rubber that perhaps his greatest economic work was done. He strongly advocated the plantation of Para rubber, and it is said that his pioneer tapping experiments were largely responsible for the foundation of that industry, upon which so large a share of the wealth of Malaya has rested. He also took up the study of minor products, both agricultural and forest, and reported on timbers, rattans and other products about which there was little original information extant. According to the *Bulletin*, Mr. Ridley during sixty-three years of activity published more than five hundred books, papers and notes.

BETWEEN 1888 and 1894, in addition to being director of the Gardens, Mr. Ridley was also director of forests, Straits Settlements. It was to Ridley's initiative and knowledge during the last dozen years of the century that the country was not in many important parts deprived entirely of its forests through the practice of shifting cultivation, coupled with ignorant exploitation. With the progress made in the political management of the States, the development of agriculture was a necessity, and towards this Ridley lent an invaluable hand. But outside, or between agriculture and forestry, came the new industry of rubber. The whole growth of this industry corresponded with Ridley's period of service from its earliest infancy to the great boom in 1910–11. On the economic side of his activities Ridley was a prodigious worker; but on the other side he turned out, as is well known, an enormous amount of purely botanical work. It was due to his work that the Malayan Forest Department was able to start off with immeasurably more knowledge of the composition of the forests than is the common lot of tropical foresters generally. His "Flora of the Malaya Peninsula" and "Malay Plant Names" were invaluable aids. The *Bulletin* also contains an appreciative note on Ridley's work on the flora of the Netherlands Indies.

Refugee Scientific Workers and other Scholars

AN appeal over Lord Rutherford's name appeared on March 18 for support for the formation of a Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, to act as a permanent successor to the Academic Assistance

Council. In the past three years, the Council has given extremely valuable assistance to university teachers displaced in Germany for political or 'racial' reasons, and has also been able to help refugee scholars from other countries. Of the 700 German refugee scholars, 363 are already permanently re-established, and a further 324 are still being temporarily maintained as research guests. Recent developments in Germany, especially since the publication of the Nuremberg legislation, have convinced Lord Rutherford that there is a continuing need for an assistance organisation, and the Council can no longer regard its work as purely of a temporary emergency character. Membership of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, which will take over the duties of the Council, is open to all who pay an annual subscription of a guinea or more, or covenant for a seven-year contribution, or make a capital donation or bequest. Lord Rutherford hopes that the Society will build up an 'academic assistance fund' from which research fellowships and studentships can be awarded to scholars displaced from any country on grounds of race, religion or political opinion. This fund will be administered under the auspices of His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, the president of the Royal Society, the president of the British Academy, Lord Horder, Lord Rutherford and the Hon. R. H. Brand. We hope that Lord Rutherford's appeal will meet with a generous response. It would be a magnificent demonstration of the widespread desire to defend the freedom of learning if the new Society had a large membership drawn from outside as well as from within the academic world. Contributions should be sent to Lord Rutherford of Nelson, O.M., F.R.S., President, Academic Assistance Council, 12 Clement's Inn Passage, Clare Market, W.C.2, made payable to the "Academic Assistance Council".

Australia and the Mandates

ALTHOUGH there has been a tendency, owing to the course of events, to focus attention on Africa in discussing the future of mandated territories, the uncompromising attitude of the Commonwealth ministers in reply to questions in the Federal Parliament on March 13 serves as a reminder that in Australia this question is regarded as a vital issue. Not only did Mr. Lyons, the Prime Minister, affirm the Commonwealth's whole-hearted support of the British Government's declaration on the matter of the return of the colonies to Germany, but also Sir George Pearce, Minister for External Affairs, in the Senate, as reported in *The Times* of March 14, recapitulated the strategic arguments, which make the retention of German New Guinea by Australia and the Japanese mandate essential conditions of the