

## 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

security of Australia and of stability in the Pacific. He struck to the root of the matter, however, when he reminded his hearers that Australia in her administrative policy in New Guinea has been actuated by the British conception that colonial possessions are trusts to be administered in the best interests of the native populations. In support of this contention, Sir George pointed out that in present conditions the natives of the territory formerly German New Guinea are better protected, and that the development of roads, shipping, air transport and medical and educational services have contributed to their well-being and contentment. It is perhaps worth while to add, for the benefit of those who have not followed closely the extension of the administrative services of Papua to German New Guinea since the latter became a mandated territory, that this successful result is not fortuitous. It arises out of the efforts which have been made on behalf of the Australian Government to add to scientific knowledge of the country and people, and the administration's far-sighted adaptation of that knowledge to the needs of the situation.

#### Flying Boats for North Atlantic Air-Routes

In addition to the specially fitted Short flying boats, and the Mayo composite aircraft mentioned in *NATURE* of March 7, p. 390, an order has now been placed for two four-engined De Havilland monoplanes for experimental Atlantic flights. It is understood that a regular North Atlantic air mail service is first visualised, which will be thoroughly tried out before passenger services are attempted. The new De Havilland machines are based, in design, on the 'Comet' type, that won the recent England to Melbourne air race, and bear a strong resemblance to them in general appearance. They are monoplanes, with the four 'Gipsy' engines partially buried in the wings, and are fitted with retractable undercarriages. The bodies of the machines are constructed so as to float in the event of a forced landing on the water, and additional buoyancy is given by a watertight construction of the wings. Messrs. De Havilland's method of fabrication, as used on the 'Comet', lends itself very well to this requirement. It is estimated that the cruising speed of the machines will be more than two hundred miles an hour, with an air endurance of three thousand miles. This same type should also be suitable for long-range high-speed naval reconnaissance. It is anticipated that these machines will be ready for delivery by November or December next.

#### New Fruit Products

For the past few years the Fruit Products Department of the University of Bristol Research Station at Long Ashton has been engaged in the experimental production of various wines, syrups, squashes, liqueurs, etc., prepared from the common varieties of fruits grown commercially in Great Britain. The work has now reached a stage where many of the products are capable of commercial manufacture, and on March 11 a demonstration was held at which

an opportunity was provided for representatives of food and beverage manufacturers and others interested in the industry to sample the various new preparations. Several fruit syrups were available which retained the natural flavour of the fruit after being stored for a number of years. These were particularly attractive in conjunction with cream ice in the American fashion, strawberry and loganberry syrups being outstanding examples. The juices of these two fruits were also successfully made into pleasing wines, whilst a spirit distilled from strawberry juice and flavoured with loganberry syrup made an attractive liqueur. Fruit squashes were also represented, that from black currant being of particularly pleasing quality. A number of non-alcoholic apple juices were displayed, and methods of storing these beverages without fermentation were demonstrated. In view of the probable rapid development of milk bars, much interest was shown in the 'milk shakes' prepared from a wide variety of pure fruit syrups, and data were presented to show that curdling of the milk does not normally occur at ordinary temperatures. The ultimate object of this work is to provide new outlets for fruit, in addition to those already existing through the fresh-fruit markets and the canning and jam industries. It is anticipated that this will lead to a considerable increase in fruit growing in Great Britain, whilst at the same time the grower will be assured of disposing of the bulk of his crop, and the serious wastage hitherto associated with glut crops will be considerably reduced.

#### Bibliography of Natural History

ON March 14, a meeting was held at the Royal Entomological Society of London to consider the foundation of a society for the study of the bibliography of natural history. Dr. C. Davies Sherborn, in opening the meeting, gave a brief statement as to the reason for the summoning of the meeting, and invited those present to express their views as to the desirability of establishing a society. In the discussion which ensued, warm approval was expressed with the proposal to found a society, especially in view of the suggestion that such society should undertake the publication of a journal to which interested persons could turn for information on matters concerning the bibliography of natural history. At the conclusion of the discussion, Mr. W. L. Sclater moved "that a Society for the study of the bibliography of natural history be founded, those persons here present, together with those who had signified their agreement with the aims of the Society and were unable to be present, being constituted Original Members". This proposal, seconded by Dr. Karl Jordan, was carried unanimously. It was then decided to appoint the following committee to deal with the preliminary details, and the committee was instructed to call a general meeting in three months' time: Dr. C. Davies Sherborn, Prof. W. A. F. Balfour-Browne, Francis Hemming, J. Ramsbottom, Dr. T. A. Sprague, A. Coekburn Townsend, Francis J. Griffin. All inquiries should be addressed to Mr. F. J. Griffin at 41 Queen's Gate, South Kensington, S.W.7.