

News and Views

Science and Social Ethics

THE attitude of scientific workers towards warfare, and what it now signifies to the future of the human race, has been the subject of many articles and other communications published in *NATURE* in recent years. Following a leading article in the issue of May 9, 1936, a letter from twenty-two graduate workers at the University of Cambridge was published in *NATURE* of May 16, and similar views on the international character of science and the barbarity of war were afterwards expressed by representatives of science in Cape Town and Bangalore. Whatever part physical conflict between individuals or communities has taken in the progressive development of man in the past, it cannot be questioned that the outlook for the future is very dark if all the resources of modern science are to be available for destructive purposes in the struggle for superiority among nations. Dr. Goebbels, who practically controls the Press of Germany, has said: "War is the most simple affirmation of life. Suppress war, and it would be like trying to suppress the processes of Nature". Such a primitive conception of the functions of war leaves out of consideration man's ethical and spiritual nature, and regards him purely as a fighting animal. Those of us who believe in a higher destiny for the human race cannot think it will be achieved through the use of high explosives, poison gas and incendiary bombs to settle disputes between civilized communities. It is because of such uses of their discoveries that scientific workers have not only the right but also the responsibility of making a collective pronouncement upon these disturbing aspects of our so-called civilization. Science has a message to deliver and a social mission to perform with far higher aims than those usually associated with it in the public mind. It believes in the evolution of social ethics, and therefore associates itself with all spiritual teaching which will promote peace upon earth and goodwill among men. On this account we are glad to put on record the following resolution adopted at the spring session of the Church Assembly at Westminster last week; and we suggest that a similar resolution might just as appropriately be passed at a representative assembly of workers for the advancement of natural knowledge.

The Christian Church and War

THAT this Assembly—

(1) endorses the Resolution of the Lambeth Conference, 1930, that war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ;

(2) deplores the general rearmament throughout the world;

(3) calls upon all Christian people to redouble their efforts to promote international good will;

(4) assures the Government of its moral support in all efforts to remove the political and economic causes of war, and in securing a general reduction of armaments by international agreement;

(5) welcomes the declared policy of the Government to adhere to the Covenant of the League of Nations, and to use armed force only for the defence of the country and in the interests of international security and peace;

(6) recognizes the right of the Government to maintain such forces as the Imperial Parliament deems necessary for the pursuance of this policy, and believes that, so long as this policy is maintained, Christian citizens may bear arms in the service of their country;

(7) affirms the responsibility of Christian people to support, criticize, or oppose all defence programmes in the light of Christian principles and in relation to their advancement of the Kingdom of God.

The University of Oxford Appeal

ON February 9, in speeches by Lord Halifax and others at the Goldsmiths' Hall in London, the appeal that the University of Oxford is making for money was launched. The capital sum aimed at is a million pounds, and some of the needs for which this sum is required are urgent. About a quarter of it is needed to ease the fund which the University has been accumulating for paying its share of the large cost of the extension to Bodley's library now being built. A similar amount is needed for the erection and equipment of new laboratories and other buildings. The remainder is required as a trust fund, the interest of which may be used to endow for a period of years new developments in any subject which looks promising, rather than be tied down to this particular subject or that. These needs are altogether separate from those of the medical school, which have been generously met by Lord Nuffield recently, and cannot be paid for out of his two million pounds gift. That gift, unlike some gifts, will not in any way be a liability on the University, but obviously the new school of clinical research which it is calling into existence, by quickening research throughout all departments of the University, must indirectly make new endowments of scientific departments a necessity. The needs for which the appeal is being made are, indeed, independent of, and of longer standing than, those of the medical school, and Lord Nuffield has recognized this by subscribing an additional £100,000 towards the million pounds required.

AGREEMENT has been reached as to the order in which the immediate scientific needs should be met. Most urgent is a new physics building for Prof. F. A. Lindemann. The Clarendon Laboratory of 1872, in which his department is housed, was never a suitable