

News and Views

Prof. G. G. Henderson, F.R.S.

THE medal of the Society of Chemical Industry has been awarded to Prof. G. G. Henderson, regius professor of chemistry in the University of Glasgow. The Medal is presented every alternate year for conspicuous service to applied chemistry. Prof. Henderson began a life-long association with teaching in 1884, when he became assistant to the professor of chemistry in the University of Glasgow. He also possesses the unique distinction of having been president of the Chemical Society, the Institute of Chemistry and the Society of Chemical Industry. For a number of years, he was one of the secretaries of Section B (Chemistry) of the British Association, in 1905 he became recorder, and in 1916 he was president. Much time and energy has been devoted by Prof. Henderson to the prosecution of original research—mostly in the organic field and particularly the chemistry of terpenes—and to the supervision of the research work of students.

Destruction of the Bed Bug

A PROMISING advance in solving the problem of the destruction of bed bugs is reported in the *British Medical Journal* of February 27, p. 459, by Messrs. S. A. Ashmore, of the Government Laboratory, and A. W. McKenny Hughes, of the Natural History Museum, acting for the Committee of the Medical Research Council. That the evil is a grievous one, although often passed by on account of the unsavoury nature of the subject, can be gathered from conversations with medical officers of health, who have been known to declare that they can identify streets with infested houses from the paleness of the children due to sleeplessness produced by bites. It has been said that in hot weather children are driven from their beds to play in the streets in some quarters during the light night hours. Disadvantages attach to most of the treatments previously tried. Thus hydrocyanic acid in the gaseous form is lethal to the insects and also to their eggs, but the use of this highly toxic substance obviously requires great precautions, especially, for example, in treating a room situated in the midst of tenements. Certain chlorinated aromatic derivatives appeared promising, but were found to act as liver poisons on the animal organism, and presumably on man, if traces were left unevaporated.

THE authors put forward a simpler method with which they have had promising results both in the laboratory and in about two hundred infested houses. It consists in spraying the room at a temperature not below 60° F. with a quantity of fairly high boiling coal-tar naphtha for which a specification is given, the room being thereafter sealed for eighteen to twenty-four hours. It is claimed that this sub-

stance is not only lethal to the insects, but is also an ovicide, and that it is not harmful to other animals. The concentration of vapour necessary is well below that of the flash-point of its mixture with air. Research is going on at the Field Biological Station of the Imperial College of Science to determine which of the many constituents of this coal-tar naphtha is specially efficacious, but the above-quoted report points to a remedy, by the careful use of a cheap and easily obtained product. It is greatly to be hoped that this method proves successful, for this social evil is a very great and widespread one.

The Boulder Dam

A LECTURE on the remarkable engineering achievement, known as the Boulder Dam, across the Colorado River about thirty miles south-east of Las Vegas, Nevada, where the river forms the boundary between the States of Nevada and Arizona, was delivered to the Institution of Civil Engineers on April 15 by Mr. John Lucian Savage, chief designing engineer, Bureau of Reclamation, United States Department of the Interior. The Dam has already been referred to in *NATURE* (Feb. 9, 1935) and the leading particulars will be given in one of a series of articles on "Water Power Developments in the United States", already prepared and awaiting publication. Mr. Savage's lecture was a very detailed account of the engineering features of the undertaking and of the constructional methods employed. It is interesting to note that the four diversion tunnels for the river (which were a necessary provision at the outset of operations) each 56 ft. diameter bore and 4,000 ft. long, were driven through unusually sound monolithic rock, with the result that 1,500,000 cubic yards of excavation in the three miles of tunnel were removed without the use of timbering or roof supports of any sort. "The ideal character of the andesite breccia rock for tunnelling purposes, as evidenced by this record, is one of the marvels of Boulder Dam." The reservoir behind the dam, called "Mead Lake" in honour of the late Dr. Elwood Mead, has a capacity of 30,500,000 acre-feet, of which 9,500,000 acre-feet has been reserved for flood control. This volume of flood storage, combined with the 520,000 cusecs (cubic feet per second) of flood discharge capacity, provides for an estimated inflow into the reservoir of nearly a million cusecs without overtopping the dam. This extraordinary provision for inflow is made in view of the remote contingency of the failure of an upstream dam.

A Film of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

A PRIVATE view of a new 'documentary' film of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, was given to a number of men of science in London on April 14. The film, which was made by Short Film Productions,