

News and Views

Co-operation Between the Nations

ON Friday, January 27, there was broadcast in the news bulletin in German sent out by the B.B.C., and again in the news bulletin in English later in the evening, an appeal, signed by eighteen leading men in science, literature, the arts, and medicine in Great Britain, to "men of good will who value the fruits of civilization" to join together to prevent the catastrophe of war. "A spirit of uneasiness broods over the world", the appeal began, and the peoples everywhere, while they know that warfare between modern States can bring no final good, see the armaments of the nations ever growing. It is time for men to break down the artificial barriers of hatred by which they are in danger of being divided, and "to speak across the frontiers to those who feel as they do". The appeal concluded: "We appeal above all to leaders and people in the great German Reich to use those great gifts by which they have for centuries enriched our common heritage in all fields of human knowledge and activity and to join with us in a supreme effort to lay the spectre of war and enmity between nations, and in a spirit of free and willing co-operation, by which alone can their needs and ours be satisfied, to build with us a better future so that we may not only preserve civilization but hand it down to our children enhanced by our experience".

THE signatories of this dignified appeal were: Lord Willingdon, Lord Derby, Lord Dawson of Penn, Lord Horder, Lord Macmillan, Lord Stamp, Mr. Montagu Norman, the Right Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, Prof. G. M. Trevelyan, Lord Eustace Percy, Sir Michael Sadler, Dr. Vaughan Williams, Sir William Bragg, Sir Arthur Eddington, Sir Edwin Lutyens, Sir Kenneth Clark, Mr. John Masfield, and Lord Burghley. While the real effect of the appeal, through the medium of the broadcast word, will never be assessed, it cannot be doubted that it will contribute to the promotion of that international good will which all right-thinking men must desire.

National Service in Great Britain

THE guide to National Service which has now been issued briefly describes the various civilian services, such as air raid precautions, police, fire services, nursing and first aid, for which volunteers are required, and indicates those for which part-time training in peace time is or is not required. Details are also given of the various branches of the armed forces for which recruits are required and how to join. A Central Bureau is being established by the Ministry of Labour for men and women with professional, scientific and technical qualifications who would be prepared to undertake specialized work in

the event of an emergency. The provisional Schedule of Reserved Occupations includes such classes of scientific workers as bacteriologists (25), chemists (21), engineers (25), physicists (25), from the age indicated, and in his introduction to the guide, Sir John Anderson expresses the hope that workers in such reserved occupations will fit themselves for part-time duties such as air raid precautions at their places of work. The guide and the schedule make it clear that the Government is fully alive to the importance of having available a record of men and women with scientific and technical knowledge. It is to be hoped that, should an emergency arise, the Government will see to it that proper use is made of their services.

The late Mr. S. H. Ray

THE remarkable record of the late Sidney H. Ray as a student of the languages of the Pacific, which Dr. A. C. Haddon reviews in his obituary notice (see *NATURE* of January 28, p. 149) is an outstanding achievement of scholarship in adverse circumstances, which has few, if any, parallels in either field investigation or academic study. Not only was Ray compelled to make the work for which he was peculiarly fitted by genius and temperament the secondary consideration of his scanty leisure, but also he laboured in an unmapped field, in which the difficulties would have taxed the energies and powers of concentration even of a student freed from all other preoccupations. The tragedy of Ray's career, however, lay not so much in the conditions in which his studies were pursued, as in the fact, as he himself would have been the first to contend, that through lack of more adequate leisure so much of the unique linguistic knowledge he had acquired, and still more his reasoned conclusions and inferences from that knowledge, have been lost to science and the world. Many years ago, both the Bible Society and Ray's employers, the London County Council, expressed amazed admiration at his vast erudition, but even though the former was afterwards able to make use of his assistance, both bodies expressed regret that they could not offer him the opportunity needed for the development of his powers. When a unique capacity for the advancement of knowledge such as that possessed by S. H. Ray is brought to light, it is surely the duty of the community to see to it that it is not wasted, as undoubtedly it was to a great degree in this instance.

Petrus Camper (1722-1789)

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