

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)

THE Faculty of Medicine of the University of Groningen, in collaboration with the *Netherlands Journal of Medicine* and the Netherlands Society for the History of Mathematical and Natural Sciences,

will commemorate in April next the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the death of Petrus Camper, physician, anatomist, obstetrician and artist. The name of Camper is perhaps now most frequently recalled in connexion with his contributions to the foundation of craniology as a scientific study. He was the first to make use of the facial angle—an invention apparently of the artist Dürer—as a factor in racial discrimination. The occasion is not without special interest to science in Great Britain, as it was during Camper's visit to London in 1748, through his association with Pringle, Mead and Pitcairn, and his familiarity with the collections of Sir Hans Sloane, Collinson and others that his interest in natural history was stimulated, if not actually aroused. Camper was born on May 11, 1722, at Leyden, where he was educated and took his degree in philosophy and medicine in 1746. He afterwards held professorial chairs at Franeker (1750), Amsterdam (1755) and Groningen (1763), being appointed councillor of State in 1787, two years before his death in 1789. He was among the most distinguished men of science of international standing of his day. Not only was he a fellow of the Royal Society of London, but also he shared with Boerhaave the then unique honour for a foreigner of membership of the Paris Academy of Sciences. His works, of which a collected edition was published in Paris in 1803, covered a wide field, ranging from the physical education of children to detailed studies in anatomy, physiology and natural history. Among his anthropological treatises were studies of the origin and colour of negroes, and on the variation of the facial angle in different races.

Preservation of Wildfowl

AN amendment put forward by the promoters of the Wild Birds (Duck and Geese) Protection Bill has secured the withdrawal of the opposition, on behalf of shore-shooters, which has been holding up the Bill in the House of Commons, and it is to be hoped that it will now have a successful and rapid passage. The amendment provides separate close-times for wild duck and geese above and below high-tide mark; further, the date of the period of prohibition of import of wildfowl will commence on February 1. This last is an extremely important feature of the Bill, for it stops the demand for duck caught in decoys on the Continent during the breeding season. The Bill, which is promoted by the International Committee for Bird Preservation (British Section) and has the full support of the Government, is part of a big international scheme to preserve the stock of wildfowl in Europe. The accumulation of adverse effects of modern civilization is having a most serious effect on wild duck and geese. Cold storage, facilities of transport, draining of land, development of arctic areas and over-commercialization by means of decoys are but a few of the factors which are depriving wildfowl of their nesting and resting grounds and causing their destruction on a vast scale. The shooting season is also admittedly too long in many countries. Sweden has already taken drastic steps by prohibiting all shooting in several

of its largest provinces, Denmark and Germany have greatly restricted their shooting seasons, and other European countries are alive to the necessity of action to safeguard the general stock of wildfowl before it is too late. The state of affairs in America, where wildfowl have been reduced to a perilously low number, is only too gloomy an example.

Engineering and Social Science

IN a recent address to the Manchester and District Association of the Institution of Civil Engineers on the work of the civil engineer in relation to social and international problems, Mr. R. D. Brown urged that engineers are no better qualified for statesmanship or politics than the medical man, the lawyer, the psychologist, the physicist or the parson. Engineering science has nothing to do with solving the social, economic and political problems of mankind, and the scientific and the political minds and methods of working have nothing in common. While engineers should be mindful of their duties as citizens, they can only engage in politics if they are prepared to give up engineering altogether and devote their time and energy to a new way of life. Mr. Brown is sceptical of the value of the proposed Council of Engineers, and recommends rather that any man of science, whether an engineer or not, who desires to help in this matter to get into touch with the committee of the newly formed Division for the Study of the Social and International Relations of Science of the British Association. The committee will require all the help it can obtain, whether from engineers, chemists, biologists, publicity experts or others. Mr. Brown referred to the importance in thinking about such problems of divesting the mind of all prejudice, superstition and humbug, and of laying aside all preconceived political, social or racial notions. He considered the committee's work might prove to be the most important investigation ever undertaken by the British Association.

Steel Manufacture in South Wales

THE project of a new steel works and rolling mill at Ebbw Vale in Monmouthshire designed on the latest lines and including a hot strip rolling mill for continuous production has aroused considerable interest. The size of the undertaking may be estimated from the fact that the plant cost about ten million pounds, and is designed to give an output of 600,000 tons per annum of tin plate and sheet steel of the highest quality. The raw materials, coal and limestone, are in the immediate vicinity and transport facilities are good. The electrical part of the equipment is very complete. The works have an installed capacity of 250,000 kw. and will consume approximately 200 million units per annum. The Victoria generating station of the former Ebbw Vale Company has been largely reconstructed, but to provide the greatly increased demand of the new plant a grid supply at 132 kv. is brought from the Upper Boat power station, a distance of eighteen miles. The supply of iron ore for the works is obtained from Northamptonshire, and ample coal is obtainable