

NEWS AND VIEWS

Sir Richard Gregory and the British Association

SIR RICHARD GREGORY, who has been elected president for the coming year of the British Association, has been connected intimately with its activities for the past forty-three years. Both on the Council and upon sectional committees, his wide knowledge of men and their achievements, his tact and his infinite capacity for work have made his services of special value to the welfare of the Association and the progress of science. At the creation of Section L (Educational Science) in 1901, Sir Richard was one of the secretaries, and he has remained in the closest touch with the Section since that date, serving as president in 1922. No one has done more to keep the Section alive to the more pressing problems of education, and he brought to it the men and women most competent to advise on the special topics of the year's programme. He has also taken a vital part in the work of the committees of sections appointed to inquire into special problems. These committees often comprise a long list of distinguished names, but experience shows that the real work of gathering information and drafting the report falls upon comparatively few. Sir Richard was invariably one of these few. In the past thirty-eight years, he has served upon more than twenty such committees either as chairman, secretary or ordinary member, and it must be remembered that these committees run for several years and report annually.

DURING the early years, Section L was much concerned with the place of a training in scientific method in the curricula of schools of all grades, and devoted itself mainly to scholastic problems. During this period, Sir Richard's services were invaluable. Among the more important reports for which he was in large measure responsible were those on practical and scientific studies and the position of science in the school certificate examination, with which was associated a report upon the influence of examinations on curricula and teaching methods. The first of all these reports, on the teaching of elementary mathematics, has affected profoundly the methods of mathematical teaching in schools of all grades. In later years Section L has been more concerned with the social, industrial and cultural relations of science in school education, and here again Sir Richard's wide knowledge of movements and their leaders has enabled the Section to bring to its assistance those most able and willing to help. He himself gave much time to the reports upon the mental and physical factors in education, to the many aspects of adult education, the effects of the free-place system in secondary schools and to training for overseas life. At the Nottingham meeting Sir Richard induced Mr. H. G. Wells to give his stimulating and provocative address on the informative content of education, which gave rise to a valuable

report. Sir Richard was also chairman of the Conference of Delegates of Corresponding Societies in 1921.

No mention has been made thus far of Sir Richard Gregory's connexion during the past forty-five years with NATURE, from the editorial chair of which he retired at the end of last year. But it will be easily recognized that much of his work for Section L was intimately bound up with his wider interests. His zeal for the promotion of scientific research, its popularization and its application to everyday life was well shown when he offered a platform in NATURE early last year for the expression of opinions on the desirability of providing for more direct contact between men of science and public affairs, a movement which came to fruition in the establishment at the Cambridge meeting of the British Association of the new Division for the Social and International Relations of Science, with Sir Richard as its first chairman. During the many years when Sir Richard directed the policy of NATURE, he demonstrated time and again his belief in the mission of science as an instrument for the promotion of social, intellectual and industrial progress, and his election as president of the British Association sets a seal of approval on the action of the Association in forming the new Division. The Association may be assured that its objects, as set forth by its founders, and in particular, two of them, namely, "to obtain a greater degree of national attention to the objects of science, and a removal of those disadvantages which impede its progress", are safe in the hands of its new president.

Recruiting Men with Technical Qualifications

THE Ministry of Labour announces that technical committees associated with University Recruiting Boards have been set up to deal with offers of service from men less than twenty-five years of age with qualifications in engineering, chemistry, metallurgy, physics, the biological sciences and mathematics, in order that they may be allocated to an appropriate form of national service. The committees will sit in all cities with universities or university colleges in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and applications, which should be made in the first instance to a local office of the Ministry of Labour, will be referred to the technical committees and the University Recruiting Boards. This offer is open to men who are starting on their final year of a degree course, or already hold a university degree in any of the following subjects: engineering, chemistry, metallurgy, physics, the biological sciences (including agriculture) and mathematics (including statistics); and to men who are starting on their final year of study or already hold a Higher National Diploma or Higher National Certificate in mechanical or electrical engineering, or the associateship of the Institute of Chemistry.