NEWS AND VIEWS

Dr. C. H. Desch, F.R.S.

PERHAPS the outstanding characteristic of Dr. C. H. Desch, who retired from the post of superintendent of the Metallurgical Department of the National Physical Laboratory at the end of last year, was the astonishing—possibly unique—breadth and depth of his scientific knowledge and interests. Educated at the Finsbury Technical College, the University of Würzburg and University College, London, as a chemist, he entered the Metallurgical Department of the last institution in 1902. From 1909 until 1920 he was at the University and Royal Technical College, Glasgow. In 1920 he was elected to the chair of metallurgy in the University of Sheffield, a post which he held until 1931. Thus from 1902 until 1931 he was almost continuously engaged in metallurgical teaching and research.

Although primarily a metallographer, Dr. Desch's knowledge of the more practical aspects of metallurgy is wide, and his contributions to discussions are invariably welcomed by those engaged in industry. Alongside his metallurgical work, however, Dr. Desch has retained his interests in every branch of chemical advance; but the chemistry of cements and concrete, the intermetallic compounds, and the crystalline state in general have claimed his chief attention. The respect in which his scientific abilities have been held may be gauged by the variety of offices which he has filled. From 1926 until 1928 he was president of the Faraday Society; during the winter of 1931–32 George Fisher Baker lecturer in the University of Cornell, while at present he is president of the Institute of Metals and vice-president of the Iron and Steel Institute. Dr. Desch is now scientific adviser to the Iron and Steel Research Council.

Dr. C. Sykes

As chemistry was the avenue which led Dr. Desch into the field of metallurgy, so, in the case of Dr. C. Sykes, his successor as superintendent of the Metallurgical Department of the National Physical Laboratory, has physics functioned. After graduating in science in the University of Sheffield in 1925, Dr. Sykes spent one year carrying out research in physics under Prof. R. S. Milner. After obtaining the degree of M.Sc. in 1926, he entered the Metallurgical Department under Prof. Desch as a Metropolitan-Vickers research scholar. Two papers on the alloys of zirconium published in the *Journal of the Institute of Metals* in 1928 and 1929 appear to represent the first fruits of his work as a metallographer.

Since 1928, Dr. Sykes has been connected with the research organization of Messrs. Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd., being engaged at first on work on high vacua, thermionic valves and X-ray tubes. About 1934, under the influence of Prof. W. L. Bragg, he began to publish in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society* and the *Journal of the Iron and Steel Institute*, and later in the *Proceedings of the Physical Society* and the *Journal of the Institute of Metals*, a remarkable series of papers on the super-lattice, the order-disorder change in β-brass and other alloys, on the supposed low-temperature critical points in iron and steel and on age-hardening. Some sixteen papers, all of real importance, represent the contribution which Dr. Sykes has made in little more than five years to that field of knowledge which is concerned with the physics of the metallic state.

Baron Richerand (1779–1840)

BARON BALTHASAR ANTHELME RICHERAND, a famous French surgeon, was born at Belley in the Ain Departement on February 4, 1779. He studied medicine in Paris, where he qualified in 1799 with a thesis on fractures of the neck of the femur, and two years later published his "Nouveaux Élémens de Physiologie", which met with a remarkable success and went through thirteen editions and was translated into seventeen foreign languages. In 1802 he was appointed assistant surgeon to the Hôpital Saint-Louis, where he later became surgeon-in-chief. In 1805 appeared his "Nosographie et Thérapeutique chirurgicales" in three volumes, of which the sixth edition was published in 1821. In 1807 he was made professor of surgical pathology in the Paris medical faculty, where he continued to lecture for more than thirty years.

In acknowledgment of the care which he had bestowed on the Russian and German wounded in 1814 in the Hôpital Saint-Louis, which had become converted into a huge ambulance, Richerand was made Commander of St. Anne and Knight of St. Wladimir by the Emperor of Russia and received the Military Order of Frederick from the Grand Duke of Baden and a gold medal from the King of Prussia. In 1824 he was appointed surgeon to Louis XVIII and in 1829 hereditary baron for his services to science and humanity. His minor works included "Des erreurs populaires relatives à la médecine" (1810) and "Histoire des progrès récents de la chirurgie" (1825). He also wrote notices of Bordeu, Cabanis, Brillat-Savarin, Ambroise Paré, etc., and a large number of articles in the "Dictionnaire des sciences médicales", *Mémoires de la société d'émulation, Bulletin de la Société philomathique, etc.* He died on January 23, 1840. A posthumous honour was paid to him in 1851 when the Avenue Saint-Louis was renamed after him.

Utilization of Scientific Research during War

IN the House of Lords on January 18, Lord Strabolgi asked the Government questions on the methods being adopted to examine 'war inventions',

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