

NEWS AND VIEWS

The Royal Society: Election of Officers

At the anniversary meeting of the Royal Society held on November 30, the following officers and members of Council were elected: *President*, Sir Henry Dale, director of the National Institute for Medical Research; *Treasurer*, Prof. T. R. Merton, formerly professor of spectroscopy in the University of Oxford; *Secretaries*, Prof. A. V. Hill, Foulerton research professor, and Prof. A. C. G. Egerton, professor of chemical technology in the Imperial College of Science and Technology; *Foreign Secretary*, Sir Henry Tizard, rector of the Imperial College of Science and Technology; *Other members of Council*, Prof. P. M. S. Blackett, professor of physics in the University of Manchester; Prof. F. T. Brooks, professor of botany in the University of Cambridge; Dr. C. G. Darwin, director of the National Physical Laboratory; Dr. A. N. Drury, Huddersfield lecturer in special pathology, University of Cambridge; Dr. H. J. Gough, director of scientific research, Ministry of Supply; Prof. J. B. S. Haldane, Weldon professor of biometry in University College, London; Prof. I. M. Heilbron, professor of organic chemistry in the University of London (Imperial College); Prof. O. T. Jones, Woodwardian professor of geology in the University of Cambridge; Prof. R. T. Leiper, professor of helminthology in the University of London (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine); Sir Thomas Middleton, chairman of the Agricultural Research Council; Prof. L. J. Mordell, Fielden professor of pure mathematics in the University of Manchester; Dr. C. F. A. Pantin, reader in invertebrate zoology in the University of Cambridge; Prof. H. S. Raper, Brackenbury professor of physiology in the University of Manchester; Prof. E. K. Rideal, professor of colloid science in the University of Cambridge; Dr. F. J. W. Roughton, University lecturer in physicochemical physiology in the University of Cambridge; Prof. A. M. Tyndall, Henry Overton Wills professor of physics in the University of Bristol.

Sir Henry Dale, C.B.E., Pres. R.S.

SIR HENRY DALE, the new president of the Royal Society, is now director of the National Institute for Medical Research, and was formerly director of the Wellcome Physiological Research Laboratories (1904–14). For ten years (1925–35) he was one of the secretaries of the Royal Society. Over a long period, and with a succession of collaborators, he carried out important researches on the effects of histamine, an amine derived from ergot. For this work he was awarded a Royal Medal of the Society in 1924. This was extended to the isolation of histamine and acetyl-choline from animal tissues. Much of his later work was devoted to the discovery of the part played by these and other substances in a large number of important physiological and pathological processes.

Closely related researches were being carried out in 1924 by Prof. Otto Loewi, then of the University of Graz, and Dale and Loewi were chosen to share the Nobel Prize for Medicine for 1936. In the following year, Sir Henry was awarded the Copley Medal of the Royal Society. As head of the National Institute for Medical Research, Sir Henry has directed a large number of investigations both within and outside his own special field. Numerous investigators from many countries have worked under his guidance.

Science and the National Welfare

SIR WILLIAM BRAGG'S presidential address to the Royal Society, delivered at the anniversary meeting on November 30, did not include the customary survey of a branch of science with which the president himself is particularly familiar, and it can well be understood that such a survey at the present time might have been impolitic, as well as occupying time of the president which is fully occupied in other directions. But Sir William did give an impression of the increasing part which science is taking in promoting the national welfare (see p. 731 of this issue). After a brief reference to the men of science—pioneers of modern developments—who have died during the past year, he paid a glowing tribute to the younger men who have followed in their steps, maintaining worthily the tradition they have received by the acquisition of new knowledge, and in addition, grappling with its relation to society and to government. This newer aspect of scientific activity has been reflected also in the Royal Society. Whereas formerly many fellows of the Society have given their services to Government departments as required, and will no doubt do so in the future also, men of science now have, in the Hankey Committee, appointed a short while ago, a small body of leaders in direct touch with the Cabinet. The Society is represented on the Committee by its president and two principal secretaries, and has thereby accepted the responsibility of seeing that scientific developments and science itself are brought into the counsels of the nation; and Sir William continued, "We hope that no hindrances from without may interfere with the Society's task, and we are determined that there shall be no lack of energy from within."

So Sir William Bragg laid down the office which he has held so worthily for the past five years. His presidency, which began in the years of peace, has extended over a period of growing anxiety for the progress of science, for the very existence of civilization itself, through the first year of a war between nations in which the whole of the forces of science are being mobilized by the combatants; and the appointment of the Hankey Committee is a recognition of this fact. But though it has required a world-wide catastrophe to raise science to the 'high places' of Government, Sir William has the satisfaction of