

In practice, it is first necessary to render the charred sheet absolutely flat. With the more robust of the specimens, this is easily possible in a pressure printing frame. If the pressure is applied evenly and fairly slowly the sheet does not tend to crack up. It has been found satisfactory to press more fragile specimens gently on to the damp surface of a gelatin-coated glass sheet, such as a fixed-out and washed photographic plate, and then to apply pressure in the frame.

The most suitable lighting has been found to be a small arc lamp close to the camera with a lens so arranged that it throws a narrow beam of light on to the copy. This gives the required illumination and, in conjunction with a long-focus lens on the camera, the optimum type of reflexion into the lens from the surface of the document. It is well known that differentiation between specularly and diffusely reflected light can be increased by the use of polarizing screens over the camera lens, but so far this additional step has not been found necessary for successful deciphering of the documents we have examined.

No claims are made for the infallibility of the method described, and, in fact, it is probably practical only with a fairly limited number of combinations of ink and paper, but, as it has been found to work excellently in some cases where all the methods described in the literature have failed, we feel that its publication may be of use to other workers.

G. A. JONES.

Research Laboratories,
Kodak, Ltd., Harrow, Middlesex.

¹ NATURE, 147, 417 (1941).

"The Man of Science as Aristocrat"

LIEUT.-COLONEL MOORE-BRABAZON has fallen into a common error of thought when he says that a politician who ensures a milk supply deserves more of his fellow men than does the inventor of the quantum theory¹. The boy who posts a lighted squib in a pillar box commits the same offence whether the pillar box is empty or is filled with an unusually important mail. The fact that an action does not seem to the majority to be of immediate consequence is no guide to its importance. Colonel Moore-Brabazon's hypothetical politician will be deserving of the severest censure if he does not ensure the necessary milk supply, provided always that he is aware that our state of mechanical and scientific development is such as to make it possible; he deserves no credit for doing what is simply his job.

Our difficulties lie in the provision of such gifted public servants. Many of those we now have, by their lack of a scientific background, are unaware that the solutions of their problems exist, and in some instances there is even a suspicion that the existence of the problem itself goes unnoticed. The imperative need for men of science with a responsibility in public affairs, in a social system which has changed out of recognition in a period measured in months, is not at all appreciated.

It is true that, "in the narrow world of science" the inventor of the quantum theory gets more attention than the average run of politicians do; but it must also be pointed out that the man of science who enters the public service is left in no doubt of the inferiority of his position compared with that of his lay colleagues. In consequence of

this, cases are known of young men with the foundation stone of scientific knowledge laid at their universities who have seen the financial folly of building a superstructure of experience thereon, and have deliberately concealed their degrees in science in order to taste the fleshpots of an 'administrative' post which could be filled by an intelligent clerk. Such a man is a waste of material, since it is only by the practice of science over a period of years that he gains a knowledge which is likely to be useful to his fellow men. By that time an attempt to 'come out of his shell' is usually out of the question on account of his age and lack of 'administrative' experience, for he will naturally prefer to remain in his shell rather than enter a new field as a junior.

R. A. JONES.

4 Enslin Road,
London, S.E.9.

¹ NATURE, 147, 544 (1941).

Reservation of Librarians

I SHOULD like to direct attention to a serious defect in the Schedule of Reserved Occupations just issued by the Ministry of Labour. While the librarians of newspapers, periodicals or news agencies are reserved at the age of thirty-five, the librarian of a university, public or research institution library is not reserved at all. General clerical staffs of universities and municipalities are also reserved at thirty-five, and it would therefore appear that the importance of what to every scientific worker is a vital tool—a well-selected and organized library under competent direction—is not realized by the Ministry.

NATURE has from time to time given space to notes about the pioneer work of the Science and Technology Department of the Sheffield City Libraries, particularly in regard to the organization of the interchange of technical information between research libraries in the Sheffield area. This Library may be used as an illustration of the unwisdom of the Ministry's decision. Since the War began, the Science and Technology Library has issued more than forty bibliographies dealing with specialized aspects of steel making and steel treatment. Requests for copies of these bibliographies have been received from scores of important industrial establishments, both at home and overseas, which maintain research staffs, and copies of some of them are being prepared for distribution by the Ministry of Supply. It would seem reasonable to suggest that the librarian of a library of this type, which can be paralleled by similar special public libraries in other great cities, should be held to contribute as much to the promotion of the War as a routine clerk in other departments of the municipal service.

J. HAWNT,

Chairman of the Libraries, Art Galleries
and Museums Committee, Sheffield.

We believe that the principal purpose of the Schedule was to obtain postponement of the calling-up of whole groups of people. In addition, an employer may apply for the deferment of the calling-up of an individual who is personally indispensable, and each such case is considered on its individual merits. In view of the high proportion of librarians for whom reservation will no doubt be justly claimed, it would seem that qualification of the Schedule definition is desirable.—Editors of "NATURE."