

NEWS AND VIEWS

Foundation of a Nutrition Society

WORKERS engaged in research on nutrition in Great Britain have been feeling the need for a scientific society devoted specifically to their subject. In the past no organization has existed to enable investigators in the many and varied branches of the science—clinical, physiological, agricultural and sociological—to find a common meeting-ground for discussion and the exchange of views. Representative workers in all these fields accordingly decided recently to form a Nutrition Society. The new venture owes its conception to a circular letter signed by the following heads of some of the better-known centres for research on nutrition in Great Britain: Sir Joseph Barcroft, chairman, Food Investigation Board; Dr. Harriette Chick, head of the Division of Nutrition, Lister Institute; Prof. J. C. Drummond, scientific adviser to the Ministry of Food, and professor of biochemistry in University College, London; Dr. John Hammond, superintendent of the Animal Research Station, Cambridge; Dr. Leslie J. Harris, director of the Nutritional Laboratory, Cambridge; Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins, professor of biochemistry in the University of Cambridge; Prof. H. D. Kay, director of the National Institute for Research in Dairying, Reading; Sir Charles J. Martin, formerly director of the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine; Sir Edward Mellanby, secretary of the Medical Research Council; Sir John Orr, director of the Rowett Research Institute, Aberdeen; Prof. R. A. Peters, professor of biochemistry in the University of Oxford. Later a meeting was held at the Royal Institution attended by representatives from the various institutes, and the following provisional committee was formed: Sir John Orr (*chairman*); Dr. John Hammond (*vice-chairman*); Dr. Leslie Harris (*hon. secretary*); Mr. A. L. Bacharach (*hon. treasurer*); Dr. Harriette Chick, Dr. E. M. Cruickshank, Dr. H. H. Green, Prof. H. P. Himsworth, Prof. A. St. G. Huggett, Dr. Franklin Kidd, Dr. S. K. Kon, Dr. B. S. Platt and Dr. H. M. Sinclair.

It is, of course, not intended that the new Society should compete in any way with existing scientific societies; its functions would be complementary to theirs and would cover a more general and in some ways less specialized field. It is proposed that the main activity of the Society at the beginning should be to hold meetings at various research institutes, at each of which some specific topic should be discussed; several main papers would first be read and would be followed by a general discussion. Arrangements have been made to hold the first conference of this kind at Cambridge on October 18, when the theme will be "The Evaluation of Nutritional Status". Further particulars of the Society can be obtained from Dr. Leslie Harris, Dunn Nutritional Laboratory, Field Laboratories, Milton Road, Cambridge.

Food Values of Eggs and Cheese

HEALTHY and well-informed public criticism is good for all Governments, particularly when, as was the case in the House of Lords debate on September 30, it is constructive in nature. The debate dealt mainly with the Government food production policy, and a good case was made out for Government support to poultry keepers in their efforts to obtain maximum egg production consistent with the maximum production of crops suitable for direct use as human food. Viscount Dawson stressed the essential value of the egg as a constituent of human dietaries, not only for its use in preventive medicine, but also because of the unique part it plays with milk in maintaining the health and vitality of children and in keeping the active population well and fit in time of war. He maintained that it would be a mistake to penalize egg production in times such as these, and in this view was supported by Lord Phillimore, who hopes that further egg production will be encouraged. That the adoption of such a policy would be in the national interest is substantiated by an article in NATURE of September 20, p. 335.

References were also made to the possible utilization of two protein-rich products for animal feeding. The first, a by-product in the production of acetone, has been proved to be of value as a protein concentrate in poultry-rearing mash, and is characterized by containing not only protein in large amount, but also in addition appreciable quantities of riboflavin and lesser amounts of pantothenic acid. The second, a synthesized vegetable protein, appears to be 'fodder yeast', a product obtained by the fermentation of molasses and ammonium salts by means of *Torula edulis*. This material received the attention of the Royal Society in the War of 1914-18, and Temperton of the National Institute of Poultry Husbandry has shown that this 'fodder yeast' is a suitable substitute for fish meal in egg production rations.

A plea was also made during the debate for the encouragement of the production of ewe milk cheese. The contention that more human food would be produced by converting ewe milk into cheese than by producing mutton is undoubtedly correct; putting it into practice, however, is the difficulty, since it means setting up a new industry as well as introducing complications in the already difficult circumstances in which the arable or grassland sheep farmer is at present working. On technical considerations it is always possible to induce a change of Government policy, since the outsider may often be better informed than the technical advisers upon whose judgment the policy has been based. Criticism, based on quantitative considerations, although well-meaning, is almost always bound to fail, since the full knowledge of the position upon which the policy is based can only be known by the Government.