

NEWS AND VIEWS

Royal Society Personal Records

THE portion of Sir Henry Dale's presidential address to the Royal Society delivered on December 1 which was of wider appeal is printed on pp. 678-80. Another section of the address, at the moment mainly of domestic interest to the fellows, dealt with a scheme which Sir Henry, with the Council's approval, has just introduced, for compiling a contemporary record of the fellows and their activities. The object is to provide the Royal Society with a complete set of personal records of all the fellows from now onwards, with annual additions to keep them up to date. So far as the more senior of the fellows are concerned, many of them, as Sir Henry pointed out, can look back over a period in which the change and expansion of scientific knowledge have been so rapid and so revolutionary that their memories of those days must be of vital interest for the history of science. The biographies of outstanding men of science provide valuable material in the form of impressions and memories of their previous generation, but such sources are relatively few in number. Sir Henry referred in particular to men like Sir J. J. Thomson and Sir Oliver Lodge, whose activities brought them into contact with many outstanding figures, and mentioned the interest—and indeed the value for posterity—of contemporary accounts which might well have been kept by fellows of the Society of their association and discussions with such outstanding figures as Claude Bernard, Louis Pasteur, Robert Koch, Carl Ludwig and others of the latter half of the nineteenth century. The proposed personal record of fellows of the Royal Society will, in Sir Henry's words, "provide a fair picture of the main currents, at least, of scientific progress in this country", which will be invaluable to the future historian who may be called upon to show the general character of this scientific age.

Martyrdom of Polish Men of Science

ON November 26 a meeting unparalleled in the history of science was held at the Royal Institution, where, in the presence of the Presidents of Poland and Czechoslovakia and General Petit (representing General de Gaulle), representatives of scientific institutions and associations from Great Britain and men of science and letters of many nations met to pay homage to the memory of the Polish professors and lecturers who had died as the result of German barbarism, and to register their protest against this crime on science and culture. Sir David Ross, vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford, who presided over the meeting, stated that the Germans are endeavouring to convert Poland into a vassal country by depriving her of her leaders, and that their brutalities fall mostly on academic life. November, 1941, is the second anniversary of the beginning of their many atrocities against science and learning, when the whole of the professorial and lecturing staff of the Jagellonian University in Cracow, the oldest in eastern Europe, was arrested and imprisoned for no

other crime than that of being Poles. He described their tortures and humiliations and concluded by saying that the action of the Germans has had the opposite effect to that desired, and the suffering professors have become a symbol of martyred Poland. Dr. Gilbert Murray said that when war breaks out the first casualty is truth, but never has the lie been organized as it now is in Germany.

Prof. Antoni Jurasz, dean of the Polish Medical School in Edinburgh, spoke with an eloquence and fire which in itself was symbolic of the unconquerable spirit of his country. He described the crushing of academic life in Poland, the suppression of all learning, the pillaging of the Universities of Cracow, Warsaw, Lublin, Lwow and Vilno and the destruction of libraries and manuscripts. He spoke of many of those who have met their death, names as well known in other parts of the world as in their own country: professors of philosophy, anatomy, physiology, mechanics, literature, zoology, engineering, biology, physics, chemistry, and many others. The international character of the present meeting testified that all are united to fight the forces of darkness and that on the graves of these fine men and on the ruins of their work will be built up a new world. Prof. René Cassin, member of the "Université de France", who spoke on behalf of the Free French and also on behalf of all Frenchmen who have been reduced to silence by the invader, expressed his horror of the crimes perpetrated on intellectuals in Poland, mentioning the death of students in France who have protested against the aggressor. M. Juraj Slavik, Minister of the Interior, and Prof. Klecanda spoke on behalf of Czechoslovakia and stressed the close association between Poland and their country. Prof. Stefan Glaser, chairman, replied on behalf of the Association of Polish University Professors and Lecturers in Great Britain.

British Chemists and the U.S.S.R.

THE Chemical Society has recently sent the following message of greeting to the All Soviet Union Chemical Society. "We, the President, Council and Fellows of the Chemical Society, send greetings to you, our Colleagues in the All Soviet Union Chemical Society. We express our unbounded admiration for your Country's courage and heroic fight against the power and might of the common foe, and our deep sympathy in the suffering and cruelties inflicted on your people by the invader. Our two Countries stand together in this struggle, and we are confident that, with the united efforts of all those who realise the abyss to which Hitlerism is leading, tyranny will be overthrown and peace and justice prevail. It is our earnest hope that out of this strife and sacrifice will emerge a new order in which the prostitution of Science to the destruction of mankind will cease and men and women engaged throughout the World in the pursuit of Science will work together in amity for the benefit of the human race."