

NEWS and VIEWS

Great Britain and the United States

THE Association of Scientific Workers has, through its Social Relations Committee, recently sent the following message to American men of science: "We British scientists, engineers and technicians organised in the Association of Scientific Workers send our greetings to our colleagues in the United States of America. . . . With the combined might and resources of the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., China and the British Commonwealth of Nations, ultimate victory is certain. We are nevertheless faced by a powerful and desperate combination of powers. They too have large resources and the advantage of having planned for war many years before actual fighting started. Their scientists have been concerned with the specific problems of warfare and supply for many years longer than we have. We must make up this leeway. But we can do more than that. We, the scientists in the Allied countries, can by pooling our ideas, technical skill and cognate information, play in concert a most vital part in the common effort. . . . We are happy to recall the very close bonds which have united men of science of our two countries in the past. Many of us have personal friends among you. We have worked in your great laboratories; you have worked in ours. This interchange will prove to be most valuable in the present situation. We have as well the terrific advantage of a common language, and, to a large extent, of a common cultural heritage. But we still have a lot to learn from each other and from our Soviet colleagues. By helping each other without stint, we shall help ourselves and we shall be laying the foundations of a truly international scientific commonwealth. American, Soviet and British scientists have the responsibility of preserving the scientific heritage of the whole world against the barbarism and obscurantism of Fascist 'ideology'. We shall do it, and we shall enrich and strengthen it by so doing. Our most sincere and best wishes to you."

The Empire Bond

YET another sign, if such be needed, of the intangible bond which links together the several members of the British Commonwealth of Nations is provided by the letter printed on p. 21 of this issue, from the honorary secretary of the Australian National Research Council. In this letter, Dr. H. R. Carne offers hospitality in Australian laboratories to scientific workers in Great Britain who are unable to make any direct contribution to the war effort. Not only scientific workers in Great Britain, but also the many students from other parts of the Empire who would normally be proceeding to postgraduate courses or research work in this country but are prevented by present circumstances, are offered an invitation to utilize the universities and research institutes of Australia, to carry on their work. While it is unlikely that many in Great Britain will be able—or will indeed wish—to leave the country at the present time, scientific workers everywhere will appreciate the friendly spirit in which the invitation

has been given, and will wish to thank their Australian colleagues for the very practical form which their concern about the influence of war-time conditions on research has taken. Although the outbreak of war in the Pacific may make it necessary for Australian institutions to modify their offer (Dr. Carne's letter was dated September 19), the fact that it was made by a country already deeply involved in the War is worthy of record.

Malayan Wild-Life

THE war in Malaya is no doubt interfering with the very interesting wild-life of that region, and the observations that have so long centred upon it. Robinson and Chasen's work on the birds of Malaya describes such interesting items as the breeding habits of the edible-nest swiftlets, the gorgeous sunbirds and the spider-hunters. Malaya has some seven hundred birds including about forty game birds and pigeons. An earlier official publication on the birds of Singapore gives a list of more than a hundred species, including eleven of the sixteen Malayan kingfishers and many interesting doves, hornbills, the vividly coloured little red and orange flower-peckers that haunt the tree-tops, the rollers, the bee-eaters and several swifts. Many species well known in Britain are winter visitors or migrants from northern Asia, including snipe, golden plover, redshank, turnstones, greenshank, and grey plover. The roseate and gull-billed terns are regular birds of Singapore island, the Kentish plover nests on the sandy shores and herons and white egrets fish the marshes. The fishing owl is a very common bird. The "Handbook to British Malaya" states that the fauna of British Malaya is excelled in number of species only in parts of South America. The one-horned Javan rhinoceros is almost extinct, and the common rhinoceros, like the Malayan elephant, has been much persecuted for ivory. The ancient Malayan tapir survives, but the Malayan bison or seladang is almost extinct in certain districts. There are several deer, and the curious serow or goat antelope is in the remoter country. The Malaya tiger is smaller than the Indian, while monkeys and apes include the curious nocturnal slow loris and also oranges, which have often been collected for European zoos. Malaya is the metropolis of the squirrels and there are more than sixty bats, including the great flying fox or keluan with a wing span of nearly five feet, which haunts the coastal mangroves.

As well as the big game hunting, the snipe-shooting and pigeon-shooting are among the best in the world, but collectors have also been attracted to Malaya for fauna and flora. Corbett and Pendlebury's 1934 work on the butterflies of Malaya records more than eight hundred species. There are probably a quarter of a million insects including more than a thousand butterflies in this region, with many of the swallowtail family. There are the famous bird-wing butterflies which often feed with their forewings fluttering and their hindwings kept fairly still. One of the most striking butterflies in the world is Rajah Brook's birdwing, *Papila brookiana*, with a wing