

in a British factory; and (2) sending a number of Chinese university teachers, especially teachers of science and technology, to Great Britain, to refresh their learning and to get acquainted with the latest developments in various scientific and technical fields.

British intellectual and industrial leaders have responded sympathetically and generously to my proposal in connexion with the first part of the project. If the arrangements so far made for sending Chinese students to be trained in Great Britain are carried out with success, I shall, in the near future, take up negotiations concerning the second part of the project.

American educational and industrial leaders have also responded to my proposal with sympathy and enthusiasm. It is hoped that through exchange of information and mutual understanding, the efforts of Great Britain and the United States to assist China to rebuild her culture and to train young minds for her national reconstruction can be co-ordinated, and that greater cultural co-operation between China and the English-speaking nations can be secured.

I have laid great stress on the importance for the national reconstruction of China after the War of training scientific and technical personnel. This must not be taken, however, to mean that other aspects of cultural studies, such as fine arts, philosophy, literature and the humanities, etc., are to be neglected. On the contrary, such subjects will receive due attention in the programme of cultural reconstruction in China. In fact, it is my hope that even in training young scientific workers and engineers each student would acquire a good cultural background together with his technical education.

## OBITUARIES

Viscount D'Abernon, P.C., G.C.B., G.C.M.G.,  
F.R.S.

**E**VEN in peace-time, there is a constant but subdued lamentation on the part of scientific men that their subject receives but scant consideration by politicians and others controlling public affairs in formulating and executing public policy. In wartime such lamentation is less subdued. When, therefore, a great public figure has used the weapon offered by science to the great benefit of the State, it is only right that his death should call for more than a passing reference. Viscount d'Abernon, whose death at the age of eighty-four occurred on November 1, was a man who, without any special training in science, came to have a great belief in the part it might play in government. He was a man of remarkably wide interests and achievements, a statesman but not a politician, and a man of the highest culture, who knew, or wished to know, the best that had been thought and said in the world. He had also the keenest appreciation of art, especially of painting and the drama. Nothing human was foreign to him.

It will be remembered that, in the War of 1914-18, alcoholic intoxication became an enormous problem, of such magnitude indeed that it interfered greatly with the production of war material. To meet this situation, Mr. Lloyd George set up the Central Liquor Control Board and made Lord d'Abernon its chairman. The object was to find any or every

means, short of prohibiting the production and sale of alcoholic liquor, which could reduce the evil to a minimum. The success obtained by this Board has never been really appreciated, but those who remember the extent of drunkenness in pre-war days cannot but conclude that the Liquor Control Board conferred one of the greatest social blessings on Great Britain. This inappreciation of valuable work is often seen when the state of man is changed for the better. Most medical men are very familiar with the phenomenon. They know only too well that, when a dramatic method of treatment is discovered, so that the dying or moribund are restored to health, this and its discoverer are hailed with great enthusiasm. They know equally well that, when a disease is eliminated by the discovery and application of a preventive method, there is no excitement, the change passes unnoticed and is taken for granted. This is what happened as the result of Lord d'Abernon's work in the case of alcoholic intoxication. The country has become relatively sober and the accursed social conditions due to widespread drunkenness have practically disappeared without comment.

Those with intimate knowledge of the Liquor Control Board know that Lord d'Abernon was not a figure-head as its chairman, but that he played the leading part in its deliberations and activities and gave up all his time to its work. The masterly way in which he controlled a body, which included brewers, clergy, politicians and Civil Servants, and obtained from them unanimous decisions, was a remarkable achievement. Confronted as he was at all stages by partisan statements on the action of alcohol, he decided that the only way of getting the truth was to appoint a body of scientific men in an advisory capacity. This body included among others Prof. (now Sir Charles) Sherrington, the late Prof. A. R. Cushny, Dr. (now Sir Henry) Dale, the late Prof. W. McDougall, and Prof. M. Greenwood. They gave careful consideration to the whole question of the pharmacology and toxicology of alcohol and proceeded to write the well-known book "Alcohol: its Action on the Human Organism". Where there were outstanding gaps of practical importance in knowledge, such as the relative intoxicating properties of concentrated and dilute alcoholic beverages, or the rate at which alcohol disappears from the body, or the kind of food which best inhibits or reduces the intoxicating effect of alcohol, he called for further experimental work. It fell to my lot to carry out this work on behalf of the Central Liquor Control Board. It was characteristic of Lord d'Abernon that he was not content simply to receive the results of this work, but often went to see the experiments on animals and man being made.

Had the Central Liquor Control Board been allowed to continue its work, d'Abernon's success in settling the liquor problem would have been even greater than it was. As soon, however, as Mr. Lloyd George saw that parliamentary agreement could be obtained on some of the Board's recommendations, he jumped in, secured the necessary legislation and dismissed the Board. Even so, its success was enormous, so that in a broadcast in 1931, Lord d'Abernon was able to say that "it had directly or indirectly added 100 millions to the public revenue and had cured the country of nearly two thirds of the evil results of intemperance". Brewers and distillers and public houses continued their lucrative trade, shareholders in these concerns drew the same or larger dividends. Patrons of Bacchus could still get their quota of

drinks, although more dilute than formerly, at more restricted hours and greater cost. Most of those directly interested in the trade were happy, and the rest of the country saw less home misery and fewer drunkards in the streets.

It is impossible in this place to write about other activities of Lord d'Abernon, but any one man who could be chairman of the Betting Control Board, of the Medical Research Council, the Industrial Health Research Board, the Lawn Tennis Association, the Thoroughbred Horse Breeders' Association, a trustee of the Tate and the National Galleries, clearly had many attributes of greatness. In the public eye, the most outstanding post held by Lord d'Abernon was his appointment in 1920 as the first British Ambassador to the German Republic, a position he held until 1926. Here again it is impossible to write of his work, but it is no secret that his ambassadorship was very successful and that in the eyes of those Germans who were in a position to know, he was regarded in Germany for several years as its uncrowned king. There was real friendship and trust between d'Abernon and Stresemann in those days, and the death of Stresemann at a crucial moment in international negotiations was always regarded by d'Abernon as one of the major calamities of Anglo-German relations.

After returning from Berlin, d'Abernon wrote a statistical report about conditions in Germany, which aroused great interest, and one result of this was his election to the presidency of the Royal Statistical Society. He was also made chairman of the Royal Commission on Museums and Galleries, and in this capacity rendered substantial services to science. In 1931 he was elected chairman of the Medical Research Council, but, shortly after his appointment, he unfortunately developed the first signs of the illness which incapacitated him, so that for the last five or six years of his life he was unable to participate in public life. It may be said, however, that during the early period of his chairmanship of the Medical Research Council, he broke all precedent by insisting on knowing personally individual workers of the Council, and on discussing with them their problems under investigation. Some of the friendships he formed with scientific men he retained to his death, and he never lost interest in their subject. His belief in the power of science to supply facts and knowledge necessary for the efficiency of the State was implicit, and towards the end of his life he wrote: "given persevering research and the proper use of available knowledge, we can confidently hope that within a generation every individual might be allowed to have the full development of health belonging to his inborn potentiality." Had we a few more men of affairs who, in addition to paying lip service to scientific methods and results, had the same belief in science and the prepared mind to make use of it, Great Britain would be a better place in which to live.

In 1934 Lord d'Abernon was elected to the fellowship of the Royal Society, a distinction he greatly prized.

EDWARD MELLANBY.

#### Mr. T. E. Barr Smith

By the death of Tom Elder Barr Smith which was recently announced by cable, South Australia has lost one of the best of her citizens and the University of Adelaide a good counsellor and generous friend.

T. E. Barr Smith received his school education at St. Peter's College, Adelaide, whence he proceeded to Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He was the senior member of the firm of Elder Smith & Co., shipowners and wool merchants of Adelaide, with large pastoral interests in South Australia. Being intimately acquainted with both the production and marketing of wool, alive to the bearings of scientific research on the former and trusted by everyone, he played a useful part in the development of Australia's primary industry along sound lines.

Education and culture in South Australia owe much to the public spirit and generosity of members of the firm of Elder Smith & Co. When the University of Adelaide was founded in 1874, Sir Thomas Elder provided one half of the cash endowment, and Robert Barr Smith, Tom's father, endowed the library. Some twenty years later, Sir Thomas Elder presented a further handsome sum to found and endow a chair of music and a Conservatorium. Another partner, Peter Waite, left his fortune to endow a chair of agriculture and a research institute as part of the Department of Agriculture. The Waite Institute at Glen Osmond on the outskirts of the city is well equipped and provided for, and one of the most flourishing research institutes in the British Commonwealth. Yet another member of the firm of Elder Smith, Walter Young, served for many years as treasurer, and the University owes much to his wise guidance, particularly during the difficult years of the world economic crisis at the beginning of last decade, when the financial stability of Australia was shaken.

Tom Barr Smith's gifts to the University of Adelaide were generous and frequent. A vigorous young University must continuously expand its activities, and he contributed handsomely towards many of its developments. His largest single gift was a new home for the library. The Barr Smith Library is a fine separate building with ample provision for expansion. It is convenient, comfortable and comely. It serves as a noble monument to keep green the memory of one of the best friends of the University in the minds of future generations of alumni.

Tom Barr Smith was genuinely interested in science and learning, and found enjoyment in the companionship of those with similar tastes. Many scientific visitors to Australia will remember the charming hospitality extended to them by Mr. and Mrs. Barr Smith at their home at the foot of the Adelaide Hills, and their enjoyment of the company of this kindly, modest and shrewd Australian.

CHARLES MARTIN.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Prof. P. Flemming, emeritus professor of ophthalmic medicine and surgery in University College, London, known also for his work in archaeology, on December 19.

Capt. T. A. Joyce, O.B.E., formerly deputy keeper in charge of the Sub-Department of Ethnography, British Museum, on January 3, aged sixty-three.

Prof. S. M. G. Ure, assistant professor of chemical engineering in the Imperial College of Science and Engineering, and reader in the University of London, on December 25.

Prof. T. Henry Wilson, formerly King's professor of midwifery in Trinity College, Dublin, and president of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland during 1926-27, on November 20, aged seventy-eight.