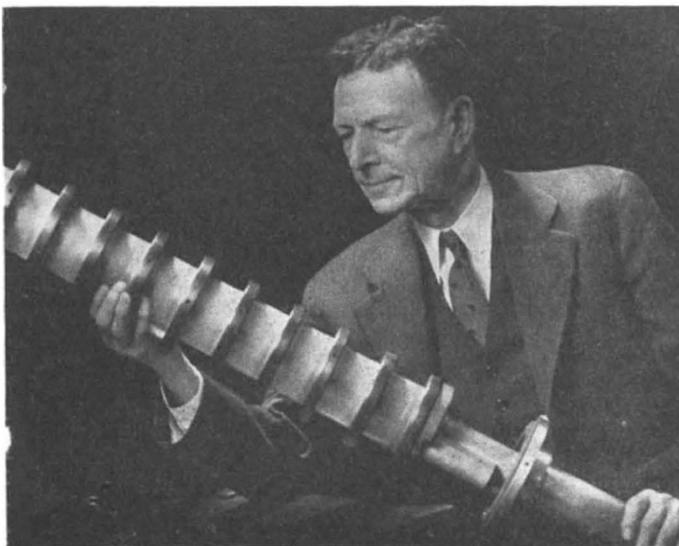


NEWS and VIEWS

Dr. W. D. Coolidge : Duddell Medallist

THE eighteenth Duddell Medal of the Physical Society has been awarded to Dr. William David Coolidge in recognition of his pioneer work in the production of ductile tungsten and, more especially, of his invention and subsequent development of the hot-cathode high-vacuum X-ray tube which is everywhere known by his name. The medal was formally presented to him on May 1 by Viscount Halifax, H.M. Ambassador in Washington, at a dinner of the American Physical Society at Baltimore. Born in 1873, Coolidge began life on a farm in Massachusetts. He found means of entering the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he graduated in 1896 and remained until 1905, except for a short period at Leipzig. He then joined the staff of the Research Laboratory of the G.E.C., Schenectady, N.Y., becoming assistant director in 1908, associate director in 1932, and finally director of research and vice-president of the Company in 1940. He has been widely honoured both in his own country and in Europe: of several universities he has received honorary degrees, and of many learned societies he is an honorary member or a medallist; in Great Britain he has received the Hughes Medal (1927) of the Royal Society and the Faraday Medal (1939) of the Institution of Electrical Engineers.

The Coolidge tube is described in his original paper as "an X-ray tube with pure electron discharge." Unlike the older cold-cathode gas tubes, it affords exact control of both intensity and 'hardness' of the radiation through the adjustments of the filament current and the accelerating potential difference, and operates continuously without change in either respect. During the War of 1914-18, Dr. Coolidge produced complete X-ray field installations including specially designed tubes, of large thermal capacity, and later he developed self-contained oil-immersed outfits, which became widely applied in dentistry and in industrial laboratories on account of their easy manipulation. For high voltages he developed a multi-section tube with intermediate tubular electrodes for step-by-step acceleration of the electrons; in the accompanying photograph Dr. Coolidge is holding a million-volt tube of this type. Such tubes have been used for deep therapy under closely controlled conditions, and for the examination of materials in industry. In other tubes of this type the electron beam is made to emerge through a 'window' in the tube, and its effects have been investigated.



DR. W. D. COOLIDGE

Ministry of Works and Planning

THE Ministry of Works and Planning Bill, which received its second reading in the House of Commons on April 29, while recognizing the principle that private profit must not be allowed to regulate the surroundings and conditions of our life after the War, is, as the Paymaster-General admitted in his speech, a very small step towards the solution of problems of planning. The purpose of the Bill is to provide for the transfer to the Minister of Works and Planning of all the existing functions of the Commissioners of Works and the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland, and of the existing town and country planning functions of the Ministry of Health (but not its housing powers). The precise relations of the Minister of Works and Planning and

the Paymaster-General are obscure, nor is it clear how far the transfer of powers goes. The Bill is, however, a step forward towards the creation of the central authority for planning in Great Britain, put forward by the Uthwatt Committee in its first recommendations.

British Reconstruction Associations

A BROADSHEET entitled "British Reconstruction Agencies" recently issued by P E P (Political and Economic Planning) affords a valuable supplement to

the summary of research activities in this field included in the "Destruction and Reconstruction" issue of the *Architectural Review* of last July. Apart from its handier form for reference, the broadsheet includes, in addition to particulars of official agencies for physical reconstruction and of committees and voluntary organizations concerned with particular aspects, notes on the Inter-Allied Relief Bureau groups working for the Allied Governments, and organizations for the study of international reconstruction. An introductory note stresses the importance of a bold reconstruction policy as an essential part of the War effort. This was emphasized by Sir Stafford Cripps early in March and is one of the keynotes of an admirable report "The Old World and the New Society", issued by the Labour Party last month. The greatest weakness of British studies on reconstruction at present, says the broadsheet, is that they are not clearly enough linked with the War effort, and while many regard 1942 as the decisive year of this War, fewer seem aware that it may equally be the decisive year for the peace. Both may be lost if we cannot now convert the fight of the United Nations into a genuine crusade for a supreme moral principle and for the building of a