

the Science Library in London, where they can be consulted. If at a later stage it should be found possible to compile a new Russian-English technical dictionary, these glossaries will form a valuable basis to work on. A location list of Russian technical dictionaries is also being compiled, and scientific workers are asked to assist in this by sending to the Secretary of the Committee a list of dictionaries in their possession. Several scientific societies and individual men of science have approached the Committee concerning the provision of a panel of Russian scientific translators. The Committee has already collected together the names of several qualified Russian translators, and is prepared to receive names of reliable translators for inclusion in the list.

### What Constitutes a Nation ?

WHAT constitutes a nationality is as hard a question to answer as the allied one of what is denoted by the word race. J. R. Swanton, in *Smithsonian Institution War Background Studies*, No. 2, has presented the problem clearly in a manner the non-expert can readily grasp. Obviously many factors go to the formation of a nation: common physical type, geographical background, governmental unity, language, religion, economics, etc. But when the major cultures of the world, both past and present, are considered it will be found that no one of these is a dominant factor. There are true nations where the physical types are hopelessly mixed, as well as other factors which one would have thought vital to unity. On the other hand, even one of the more important criteria, namely, language, can fail to be a binding element—as witness England and the United States. Here, though the language is the same, no one can deny that there are two distinct nations. On the whole, the author seems to be driven back to the idea of the importance of voluntary associations of folk living under a government desired by the majority. This is, of course, difficult to test in the case of past civilizations, but seems to be applicable to modern nations. But if so it cannot be too much stressed, indeed it is the keystone of the theory, that what one nation may desire, in fact what may be the cement that makes it a nation, may not be at all what appeals to other agglomerations of men and women whose nationality will be determined by a totally different outlook on life.

### Industrial Health Research Board

THE Medical Research Council has appointed the following to be the members of its Industrial Health Research Board during the period 1942-45: The Rt. Hon. the Earl De La Warr (*chairman*), Prof. F. C. Bartlett, Brig.-Gen. A. C. Baylay, Dr. J. C. Bridge, Dr. A. N. Drury, Dr. T. Ferguson, Dr. M. W. Goldblatt, Dr. A. Bradford Hill, Dr. Donald Hunter, Prof. Esther Killick, Air Vice-Marshal Sir David Munro and Mr. J. L. Smyth. Prof. A. W. M. Ellis, director of research in industrial medicine under the Council, will also attend all meetings. Dr. R. S. F. Schilling, one of H.M. medical inspectors of factories, has been seconded to the service of the Council by the Ministry of Labour to act as Secretary of the Board. The terms of reference of the Board have recently been revised and are now as follows: "To advise and assist the Medical Research Council in promoting scientific investigations into problems of health among workers, including occupational and environmental factors in the causation of

ill-health and disease, and the relation of methods and conditions of work to the functions and efficiency of body and mind; and in making known such results of these researches as are capable of useful application to practical needs."

### Jean-Baptiste Van Mons (1765—1842)

ON September 6 occurs the centenary of the death of the once famous Belgian chemist and horticulturist Jean-Baptiste Van Mons who died at Louvain in 1842 at the age of seventy-six after a life entirely devoted to science. Born in Brussels on November 11, 1765, when Belgium was under foreign domination, he lived to see Austrian rule give way to French and French to Dutch, and then in 1830 to see his country gain her independence. But under every regime Van Mons steadily continued his work and it was largely through his labours that discoveries made in France became known in the countries with which she was so frequently at war. By profession Van Mons was a pharmacist, but when twenty years of age he wrote an essay on the new principles of chemistry and he subsequently corresponded with Lavoisier, Fourcroy, Monge Hachette and others. By the French authorities he was entrusted with a survey of the Belgian mines and in 1797 was made a professor at the central school of the department of Dyle. On the invitation of the French chemists he assisted in editing the *Annales de chimie* and in 1801 founded the *Journal de chimie et de physique*. By his own contributions to these and to the periodicals of Gren, Crelle, Brugnatelli, Nicholson and others he spread abroad a knowledge of the work of such as Volta, Vauquelin, Fourcroy and Chenevix. He was the first to introduce vaccination into Belgium, and all his life he experimented on the improvement of fruit trees. When the Belgian Academy was revived in 1816 Van Mons was nominated to a seat and the following year he was made professor of chemistry and agriculture in the restored University of Louvain. This post he held until 1836. Of his sons, Louis-Ferdinand Van Mons (1796-1847) was one of the chief artillery officers of Belgium and Charles-Jacques Van Mons (1798-1837) was professor of pathology in the University of Brussels.

### Francis Adams (1796-1861)

UNDER the title of "A Great Country Doctor", the June issue of the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* contains a lively article by Prof. Charles Singer on Francis Adams of Banchoory, the son of a village labourer who rose to be one of the greatest medical scholars of his age. His principal achievements were a translation of "The Genuine Works of Hippocrates" (1849), which Prof. Singer describes as "probably the most widely read of any work on medical history in the language"; "The Seven Books of Paulus Aegineta" (1844-47), which "retains to this day its position as far and away the finest venture in pure historical medical research in the English language"; and "The Extant Works of Aretæus the Cappadocian" (1853), which unlike the other two works contains the Greek text as well as the translation. His minor publications include articles to medical journals, translations of Horace and Musæus into English verse, of Gray's "Elegy" into Latin, and of Wolfe's poem on Sir John Moore into Greek. He also collaborated with his son, Dr. Leith Adams, F.R.S., in a paper read before the British Association at Aberdeen in 1859 entitled "On Ornithology as a Branch of a