

NEWS and VIEWS

Committee on Technical Education

MR. BUTLER, President of the Board of Education, has announced in a Parliamentary written answer that the following have been appointed members of a departmental committee to report on higher technological education in England and Wales: Lord Eustace Percy (*chairman*), Dr. D. S. Anderson, Sir Lawrence Bragg, Mr. W. H. S. Chance, Sir Charles Darwin, Dr. E. V. Evans, Mr. B. Mouat Jones, Mr. S. C. Laws, Dr. H. Lowery, Mr. H. S. Magnay, Sir George Nelson, Mr. J. F. Rees, Dr. R. V. Southwell, Mr. H. Fitzherbert Wright, with Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop, Board of Education, as secretary. Officers of the Board of Education will attend meetings of the committee as assessors.

The terms of reference of the Committee are: "Having regard to the requirements of industry, to consider the needs of higher technological education in England and Wales and the respective contributions to be made thereto by universities and technical colleges, and to make recommendations, among other things, as to the means for maintaining appropriate collaboration between universities and technical colleges in this field."

Application of Research in Industry

IN his address "The Application of Research" to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce on March 31, Dr. Andrew McCance said that we should not think of research merely in terms of great laboratories equipped with intricate and expensive apparatus and staffed by scientific wizards aloof from mundane affairs. Valuable information can often be obtained with the simplest equipment, and scientific men are ordinary men whose judgment has been trained to exclude prejudice and to accept only those conclusions which are supported by facts. As example, he referred to investigations on temperature variations in blast furnaces, which have led to a great increase in regularity of output and a corresponding economy in coke consumption. The structure of a research association depends on the organization of the industry. With an industry such as the iron and steel industry, in which the main production comes from a number of large units, each unit can usually make a material contribution to the common cause by undertaking in its own research department a share of the investigations required into a specific problem. Recently, however, this industry has decided to form a new research association, and in future finance for research within the industry in Great Britain will be obtained by a voluntary levy on the ingot production of all producers in the federation. All the work is controlled by a number of committees, dealing with such subjects as blast furnaces, rolling mills, alloy steels, corrosion, etc., and Dr. McCance referred in particular to the work of the Hair Line Crack Committee dealing with the minute cracks which occur in high tensile alloy steel and their prevention, as illustrating the potentialities of co-operative research. This investigation was founded on an effective scheme of co-operation between industrial and university research laboratories.

Research, Dr. McCance emphasized, begins with an attitude of mind, and it is essential first to create the correct attitude of mind in staff and throughout the organization. The research department then becomes an integral part of the production depart-

ment, planning ahead continually for the creation of new products, new processes and new economies. It is during the initial stage of employing a nucleus of scientifically trained men to create standards for raw materials and products and to investigate faults in manufacture and processes that sympathetic understanding and guidance are most required if antagonism and friction are to be avoided. When the department becomes an accepted part of the organization, additional staff is required to take over the routine work, and the original staff can begin to tackle the more fundamental problems of research-controlled development. Technical control of a business requires the employment of men who have received a technical training. No business can be made more scientific from outside, and Dr. McCance does not believe that a scientific training makes men less practical in their outlook. It is the waste of latent abilities through lack of opportunity or training that should give us more concern, and industry must co-operate in the development and utilization of training facilities if the future supply of competent executives and research workers is to be assured and the enterprise of British industry maintained.

Editorship of *British Birds*

THE place of the late H. F. Witherby, who so successfully conducted *British Birds* through thirty-six volumes, has been taken by Bernard W. Tucker, in accordance, it is understood, with Mr. Witherby's wishes. With Mr. Tucker will be associated in the editing of the journal, Dr. Norman F. Ticehurst and Major A. W. Boyd. *British Birds* has been assiduous in publishing about birds in Britain items of information many of which would otherwise have been lost to record, but it has played a more important part in encouraging scientific observation of bird-life and in suggesting problems and, by example, showing how problems may be tackled. In January 1917, *British Birds* incorporated *The Zoologist*, and thus disappeared after a long and useful history the only magazine which published notes on any aspect of British natural history from any part of Great Britain. The *Scottish Naturalist* performed a similar duty for the northern part of the kingdom, but it is a war casualty. The result is that there is now no magazine available for recording the minor observations of British naturalists on subjects other than birds, so that the cumulative value of the work of that great band of amateur observers, for which Great Britain has long been noted, is being lost. Is it too much to hope that when the War is over a *British Naturalist* will arise, wherein the ordinary student of Nature will be able to put on record field notes of casual interest and articles of connected observations?

Stereoscopic Photographs: 'Polaroid Vectographs'

INFORMATION recently released about the 'Polaroid Vectograph', a system of stereoscopic photography developed by the Polaroid Corporation, reveals that the method is playing an important part in war-time aerial photography. A short account of the underlying principles was given by E. H. Land in 1940 (*J. Opt. Soc. Amer.*, 30, 230; 1940). As in all stereoscopic systems, two photographs of a scene taken from different positions have to be presented to the observer so that the picture taken from the right is seen by the right eye, while that from the left is seen by the left eye. In the 'Vectograph' two very thin polarizing surfaces are located immediately above