

NEWS and VIEWS

Swedish Anthropological and Geographical Society:
Award to Prof. L. von Post

THE highest distinction of the Swedish Anthropological and Geographical Society, the Vega Medal, has just been awarded to Prof. Lennart von Post, of Stockholm, for his outstanding contributions to the development and application of the methods of pollen analysis. It is Prof. von Post above all others who, by his clear vision and indomitable energy, both perfected and popularized the systematic analysis of the sub-fossil pollen content of lake- and peat-deposits. Speaking at the meeting when the award was made, Prof. von Post emphasized the manner in which pollen analysis studies from all parts of the world—Tierra del Fuego, New Zealand, North



PROF. LENNART VON POST (LEFT) RECEIVING THE VEGA MEDAL OF THE SWEDISH ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY FROM THE CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN.

America, North China, as well as Europe—showed a similar post-glacial climatic drift, first of increasing temperatures, then through a period of severe heat and drought, and finally a recession to the climate of to-day. He visualized a forthcoming phase of international co-operation in pollen analysis work in systematically selected areas all over the world, by means of which we should resolve the general pattern of the cyclic climatic history of the world in the period since the last ice age. May Prof. von Post's vision be again rewarded by scientific advances comparable with those he has already accomplished.

Co-operative Research in Industry

IN reply to a question from Lord Barnby in the House of Lords on August 1, Lord Templemore reaffirmed the great importance attached by the Government to co-operative research as a means of developing to the full the use of the industrial resources of Great Britain, a vigorous export trade and a higher standard of living. While the Cotton Industry Research Association, which receives a substantial contribution from the Cotton Board, set up under the Cotton Industry Act, is the only research association which is not supported solely by voluntary contributions or voluntary levies, apart from the Government grant, recently several industries, including the wool industry, have expressed themselves

in favour of statutory powers of one sort or another, including the collection of money for research by means of a levy on the whole industry, and research associations are now much more inclined to welcome an enabling bill. Lord Templemore said he was authorized to state that the Government will be prepared to consider sympathetically the introduction of enabling legislation for this purpose, if there is sufficient demand for it from industry, and that the matter will be discussed with industry in the coming months in connexion with post-war plans. The Government would also wish to be satisfied whether there are other proper objects connected with the furtherance of the export trade or of industry's efficiency generally for which a statutory power to collect money might be desirable.

Human Factors in Industrial Output

IT is sometimes forgotten that output results from human activity and that therefore the amount will be dependent on many factors, of which it has been shown that the number of hours worked each week is one. There is abundant evidence that excessive hours result in diminished output. When, however, hours are relatively reasonable, can it be argued that a further reduction will increase the output? A recent report ("A Study of Variations in Output." By S. Wyatt and others. Emergency Report No. 5 of the Industrial Health Research Board. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1944.) 4*d.* net.) analyses some of the factors which had measurable effects on output. Study of the output records of a number of factories showed a striking variability. Some of the chief causes were: (a) changes in the type or design of the product; (b) mechanical difficulties and machine breakdown; (c) variations in the quantity and quality of the materials used; (d) progressive improvements in the methods or conditions of work; (e) changes in the type and lay-out of machines; (f) personal factors such as dissatisfaction with the methods or rate of payment, and occasional friction between the management and the workers.

The effects of the shorter hours of work were in most groups obscured by one or other of the above factors; but, when these were absent, reduction of hours from about an average of 60 to 55 a week for men, with a corresponding decrease for women, had a favourable result on the output. Absenteeism also tended to decrease as the weekly hours of work decreased. The results suggest that there is need for more research work to determine under what general or specific conditions changes of design, for example, have unfavourable effects on output, and the relative effectiveness of the chief causes of variations in output. Machines should be made for men, not men forcibly adapted to machines, which means careful physiological and psychological study.

Research and Development in Scotland

A MEMORANDUM, "Chemical Research and Development in Scotland", by R. H. S. Robertson issued as *Bull.* No. 3 (March 1944) by the Scottish Reconstruction Committee urges the need for chemical and physical research and development in Scotland, stressing particularly housing research and research in relation to hydro-electricity, the lack of trained personnel in Scotland and the inadequacy of present facilities. The memorandum suggests the formation of a Scottish raw materials department under the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research;