

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;

with a wider field of activities than a development branch of the Geological Survey which would be restricted to the study of minerals, including peat. This department should co-ordinate every stage of development from survey to production and carry out the experimental work which existing organizations are not equipped to do, as well as serve as an institution for giving additional training to the technical men who will develop and eventually run the new industries. Apart from its references to seaweed and peat, the memorandum gives very little indication of what materials call for the creation of a new department to investigate Scottish resources. Neglect of those resources will be readily admitted, but it is not clear from this memorandum why their investigation and development could not be undertaken as part of the general national research effort—why, for example, separate Scottish research into housing is required.

Astronomy and the Struve Family

ON the occasion of the award of the 1944 Gold Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society to Prof. Otto Struve, the president of the Society, Prof. E. A. Milne, reviewed the astronomical work of the Struves, which has been recognized by four awards of the Gold Medal to the family in 118 years—once in each generation (*Mon. Not. Roy. Astr. Soc.*, 104, 112; 1944). Wilhelm Struve, founder of the Pulkovo Observatory, received the Gold Medal in 1826 for his work in discovering and measuring double stars. His son, an earlier Otto Struve, was awarded it in 1850 for a paper on "The Determination of the Constant of Precession with respect to the Proper Motion of the Solar System". The third medallist was Hermann Struve, uncle of the present holder, who gained the award in 1903 for his monumental work on the satellites of Saturn. This year's award goes to Prof. Otto Struve, director of the Yerkes and McDonald Observatories, and great-grandson of Wilhelm, for his observation and interpretation of the spectra of stars and nebulae. Prof. Milne reviewed this work in some detail, and pointed out that the present medallist has followed the family tradition in founding a new observatory, and has exceeded it in directing not merely one but simultaneously two great observatories. In his power of execution of new projects, in the width and generality of the problems he has selected and attacked, and in the brilliance of his solution of these problems, said Prof. Milne, Otto Struve has worthily carried the family fame in a new branch of astronomy to a new continent, and made good.

Telepathy in Psychoanalysis

DR. H. J. EHRENWALD, formerly of Prague, has directed attention to the possibility of telepathy in the psychoanalytic situation (*Brit. J. Med. Psych.*, 20, Pt. 1; 1944). It is well known to psychical researchers that since Freud mentioned this factor in his new series of introductory lectures, his pupils have obediently followed him and are themselves now at pains to discuss the question in relation to their own patients. In this paper, Dr. Ehrenwald extends these observations not only regarding telepathy from patient to analyst but also from analyst to patient. He mentions some of Freud's own cases, including the famous case of his patient, Mr. P., which Freud thought to be very suggestive, but which few psychical researchers would regard as

worthy of serious consideration. What is, however, of more interest in Dr. Ehrenwald's paper is his obvious anxiety to warn his colleagues of the possibility of telepathy occurring during sittings with their patients, and the implications which can be derived from it. From the point of view of the psychical researcher this attitude is somewhat diverting, since for so many years psychoanalysts have declined to learn what parapsychologists could have taught them and now, having become almost convinced through Freud's influence that telepathy exists, present examples of it which exhibit so many sources of error that it is clear that they still have little appreciation of the problems on which they write. If Dr. Ehrenwald's paper disturbs still further their complacency, it will have performed a useful service.

Chinese Journal of Agricultural Science

THE British Council made a very happy choice in selecting Dr. J. Needham for its scientific mission in China. He has been indefatigable in promoting scientific work in that part of the country which remains in Chinese hands and in his efforts to keep British scientific workers informed about Chinese work. Since the outbreak of the War, most of the scientific journals in China have been discontinued, and in consequence those keen spirits that still go on with their scientific studies have their difficulties increased by the lack of any means of publication. A new journal has now been started by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry at Chungking, and the first issue is to hand. Among other papers are two on inheritance in wheat. One on dwarfness deals with the complex ratios obtained in counts of the F_2 progenies of the varietal crosses made in 1939; seven factors are assigned, of which three are complementary, three are duplicates of these and one is an inhibitor; the combinations necessary for dwarfness are discussed. The other paper is a mathematical discussion of Japanese data on the pentaploid hybrids of wheat. Trials are recorded of the Winogradsky Azotobacter plaque method for estimating potash and phosphate deficiencies in soils: this was found to be rapid and easily worked and seems likely to prove very valuable if its indications are borne out in practice. Other papers deal with the extraction of nicotine from tobacco leaves; the orange maggot (*Tetracus sp.*); and a possible vermicide plant, *Tripterygium wilfordii*. The papers are in Chinese, but with summaries in English. We wish the new journal all success.

University of London

MR. T. H. MARSHALL has been appointed as from October 1 to the University chair of social institutions tenable at the London School of Economics. Since the beginning of the War he has worked in the Foreign Office Research Department, as head of the German Section since the autumn of 1940, and as deputy director since the spring of 1943.

Mrs. Barbara Wootton has been appointed as from October 1 to the University readership in social studies tenable at Bedford College. Since 1927 she has been director of studies for tutorial classes in the University and has acted as visiting lecturer in the Department of Social Studies at Bedford College for some years.

The title of professor of chemistry in the University has been conferred on Dr. E. E. Turner, in respect of the post held by him at Bedford College.