

OBITUARIES

Brevet-Colonel F. Percival Mackie, C.S.I., O.B.E.

BREVET-COLONEL MACKIE, who had a distinguished career in the Indian Medical Service, died at Oransay, Birnam, on July 15. At the time of his death he was chief medical officer to the British Overseas Airways Corporation in London. He leaves a widow and three sons.

Born on February 19, 1875, son of the Rev. John Mackie, rector of Fylton, Glos, he was educated at Dean Close School, Cheltenham, the University of Bristol, and St. Bartholomew's Hospital. After graduating in medicine and surgery at the University of London he entered the Indian Medical Service in 1902, taking first place in the competitive examination of that year and winning the Gold Medal in medicine and the scholarship in surgery. Later in his career he added the F.R.C.P. and the F.R.C.S. as well as the D.P.H. to his professional qualifications.

In India, after a short period of military duty which included a tour as medical officer to the Young-husband Mission to Tibet, he elected for the civil side of the Service with the object of devoting himself to bacteriology and medical research, for which, at that time, organized arrangements in India were in an early stage of development. It was the time when the terrible drama that was being played by malaria, cholera and plague had confirmed the Government of India in its intention to establish an effective organization of bacteriological workers and laboratories, and when several outstanding discoveries in tropical medicine had inspired and stimulated qualified members of the Service to engage in one or other of the young sciences (particularly bacteriology, protozoology and medical entomology) which offered a prospect of finding effective means of control and prevention. Plague, which had appeared in Bombay in 1896, was still spreading eastwards and northwards throughout the country, and Mackie's first appointment in the newly created Bacteriological Department of the Government of India (which was afterwards known as the Medical Research Department) was to the Plague Research Laboratory, Parel, Bombay. This was in 1905, the year in which the British Plague Commission under Dr. C. F. Martin, director of the Lister Institute, arrived in India and selected the Parel laboratory as its headquarters. In this appointment Mackie shared in the brilliant work of the Commission which, as is well known, settled the question of rat-flea transmission and gave to India, and the world in general, fundamental knowledge of the epidemiology of plague to which little was added in later years.

From September 1908 until November 1909 Mackie was on deputation to Uganda as a member of the Royal Society's third Sleeping Sickness Commission under Sir David Bruce. On his return to India he again took up his post at Bombay.

In 1911 the Government of India deputed him for special research again, this time to study kala azar in Assam. The causal organism of this fatal disease (the Leishman-Donovan parasite) had been discovered a decade earlier; but the mode of transmission was still unknown. It was suspected generally that the transmitting agent must be an insect, but prolonged research with bed-bugs, mosquitoes, fleas, lice and ticks had yielded no convincing result. Mackie and others had observed a significant cor-

respondence between the topographical distribution of cases of kala azar and of a particular species of sandfly, and he made an important contribution when he said in his report: "The only insect which has given any return for the work put into it is the sandfly, and I am of opinion that the relation of this insect to the disease would repay further investigation". Fourteen years later the correctness of this opinion was confirmed when intensive team-work by the staff of the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine, supplemented by that of the Government of India's special Kala Azar Commission, convincingly incriminated the sandfly as the true vector.

Among much other outstanding work there is space to mention only the speedy and efficient manner in which Mackie, working under great difficulties of supply, established a central bacteriological laboratory in Mesopotamia in 1916 and thus ensured the prompt bacteriological diagnosis of cholera and other epidemic diseases which broke out among British troops on their way up the Tigris River to relieve Kut. The strain of the cholera vibrio which he isolated from a colleague who fell a victim to the disease was afterwards maintained as the type of the organism endemic in that part of the world. For his services in that War he was twice mentioned in dispatches and the honour of O.B.E. was conferred upon him.

After the War Mackie held in succession the posts of professor of pathology in the University of Calcutta, director of the Pasteur Institute, Assam, and director of the Haffkine Institute, Bombay. Later he officiated for a year as public health commissioner with the Government of India and for another year as surgeon general with the Government of Bombay. While holding these administrative offices he was honorary surgeon to the King and to the Viceroy. The C.S.I. was conferred upon him in 1932.

S. P. JAMES.

Mrs. E. J. Hatfield

MANY will have learned with regret of the death of Mrs. Hatfield in early June. Those who knew her will realize that she never spared herself; after retirement she took up part-time work for the British Social Hygiene Council.

During her earlier years she studied in the University of London and at Cambridge. Some of her student years were also spent in Germany. Possessed of an open mind, she later evinced much interest in biology and psychology and followed carefully the trend of modern biological research. At the North London Collegiate School, a great many pupils passed through her classes, and all will testify to the thoroughness of her training and to the inspiration for sound work which she inculcated. While teaching, she published the well-known text-book "An Introduction to Biology".

After her retirement from teaching Mrs. Hatfield lectured for a time at one of the training colleges. At the summer schools and conferences of the British Social Hygiene Council she will be remembered for her clearly delivered lectures and wise counsel. She played a most active part in the Association of Women Science Teachers and was always in demand as a speaker at the meetings of the Association. Her position on committees, consultative or otherwise, was recognition of the opinion in which she was held by her contemporaries.

Those of us who knew Mrs. Hatfield as a friend learned to value her pleasant personality and ready smile. One could not be in her company for long without realizing her capabilities and wide cultural interests. Her outstanding characteristic was courage—the keynote of her life. Her friends and colleagues will miss very much one who possessed a fund of knowledge and a balanced outlook on life.

P. M. TAYLOR.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Sir Arthur Hurst, president during 1927–29 of the Section of Medicine of the Royal Society of Medicine, on August 17, aged sixty-five.

Prof. S. P. Mercer, professor of agricultural botany in the Queen's University, Belfast, and senior technical research officer of the Ministry of Agriculture, Northern Ireland, aged fifty-three.

NEWS and VIEWS

Agriculture at Edinburgh

THE endowment of the chair of agriculture in the University of Edinburgh was presented in 1790 by Sir William Pulteney, Bt., M.P., as a mark of his appreciation of his old University. Agriculture thus became the first chair in Edinburgh to be founded by a private benefactor, for its twenty-three predecessors had all been instituted either by the Crown or by the Town Council of Edinburgh, and it is probably the earliest foundation of its kind in any university in Britain. The present occupant of the chair, Prof. Ernest Shearer, who is also principal of the Edinburgh and East of Scotland College of Agriculture, retires after eighteen years of service at the end of this session, and the electors have selected as his successor in both posts Dr. S. J. Watson, director-in-charge of the Jealott's Hill Agricultural Research Station of Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd.

Dr. Watson was educated at Armstrong College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and his agricultural interests have covered a wide field. He has been associated with Imperial Chemical Industries at first as officer-in-charge of the Animal Nutrition and Biochemistry Section, and latterly as director of the Agricultural Research Station. At Jealott's Hill his experimental work is well known to agriculturists and to scientific workers, and he has made a recognized contribution to the knowledge and practice of farm methods. His books include "The Feeding of Cattle", "The Science and Practice of Conservation of Crops" and "Silage and Crop Preservation", and his published papers cover many subjects associated with the feeding values of different kinds of crops, processes of preserving crops by drying and silage methods, and the planning of cropping.

Geophysics at Columbia University:

Appointment of Prof. Maurice Ewing

PROF. MAURICE EWING, associate professor of physics at Lehigh University, has been appointed associate professor of geophysics in the Department of Geology of Columbia University. Prof. Ewing is at present engaged in research for the U.S. Navy with the civilian rank of chief scientist, and will take up his new post at the end of the War. At Columbia, Prof. Ewing will direct graduate instruction in geophysics as part of a post-war programme of geological training and research, and will continue his investigations of the continental shelf and the ocean basins. In recent years, through the development of special equipment of his own invention, Prof. Ewing has made geophysical measurements, both from ships on the surface and from submarines, of the continental margin beneath the ocean along the

Atlantic coast of North America. Through these studies it was found in 1935–38 that the slope of the outwashed sediments off the Atlantic Coast did not conform to the slope of the underlying rock floor. In war-time the experience gained from these studies has been of special value to the U.S. Navy Department, and through the co-operation of the Government Prof. Ewing has been enabled to devote all his time to geophysical research, working from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, at Woods Hole, Mass.

Employment Policy and Technical Efficiency

SOME further points in regard to the White Paper on Employment Policy were elucidated in the debate in the House of Lords on July 5 and 6. Welcoming an inquiry from Lord Barnby, Lord Woolton stated that the Government proposed to take statutory powers in order to get the statistics required. On the question of cartels and international agreements raised both by Lord Trent and Lord McGowan, Lord Woolton indicated Government concurrence in the proposal that there should be a Government inquiry on restrictive practices, and urged that the question should be considered on a factual and not an emotional basis, and from the point of view of the public interest. As was independently pointed out by Lord Wardington, such agreements embody principles identical with those enunciated in the Atlantic Charter, which advocates international agreements and co-operation and the creation of spheres of interest. On the point of technical efficiency stressed by Viscount Samuel as the most important point in the White Paper, Lord Barnby, who also raised the question of the Government's views with regard to trade associations, urged that if industry is to have efficient equipment, it requires a revision of the Factory Acts to permit the two-day shift operation of female labour. Expensive new equipment must, to carry overheads, run more than eight hours in the twenty-four. Lord McGowan referred to the growing emergence in British industry of a new social outlook, and also asked for more guidance as to the basis on which future international commercial relations are to be built. The question of controls was repeatedly mentioned, and Lord Woolton's statement that the Government is already considering the steps by which we could have an orderly unwinding of the controls reflected the practical temper of this debate, which showed a deep sense of the fundamental importance of a high standard of efficiency in British industry and that the realization of the White Paper proposals would come, as Lord Woolton said, by steady evolution and the application of modern scientific methods.