NEWS and VIEWS

Royal Society: Anniversary Meeting

THE customary anniversary meeting of the Royal Society took place on St. Andrew's Day, November 30, and the main part of the address by the president, Sir Henry Dale, is printed on p. 724 of this issue of *Nature*. In addition, Sir Henry referred to other matters, more of a domestic character. Prof. A. V. Hill's mission to India, to advise on science in general and a new programme of research and its applications, occupied the prominent place justified by the unqualified success which has attended it. A special meeting of the Royal Society was held in India, the first to be held outside Great Britain, and eventually a mission consisting of six of India's scientific leaders came to Britain, as the first stage of a tour extending to Canada and the United States, to see for themselves the scientific activities and organization with which the demands of war are being met and preparations being made for the tasks ahead in a largely devastated world. The members of the Indian mission used the rooms of the Royal Society as headquarters, and shortly before they left they were received by the King and Queen, who thus showed their interest in the promotion of closer understanding and comradeship in science between India, Great Britain and the whole of the British Empire.

Sir Henry Dale then turned to plans which are being made for increased provision for research in Great Britain. Last year he announced that the Royal Society had appointed a committee to consider the prospective needs of fundamental researches in physics. As the result of representations from other branches of science, a series of other committees was appointed, to consider the requirements in chemistry, biology, geology, geophysics, geography and mineralogy. The inquiries of these committees have been directed towards the advancement of knowledge without immediate or even implicit reference to practical needs or objectives; this was decided, not because of any inferior status or interest of applied research and related investigations, but because it is felt that such researches are already receiving support from the three Advisory Councils and are more likely to attract support from private benefactors. Sir Henry also referred to the problem of State accommodation for the principal scientific societies, with which he dealt in his address last year. The Royal Society was asked by several of the specialist societies to take up the matter, and a deputation was received by the Lord President of the Council, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Minister of Works and Buildings, on behalf of the Government. The case for the inclusion in any scheme for the rebuilding of London of a centre adequate to house the principal scientific societies was presented, and the deputation was asked to furnish quantitative data as a basis for further consideration of the question.

Science and National Welfare

IN his address on receiving the Priestley Medal of the American Chemical Society on September 13, under the title "Science and the National Welfare" (*Chem. and Eng. News*, **22**, 1642; 1944), Dr. J. B. Conant suggested that one of the many ills of the world seems to lie in the fact that certain aspects of accumulative knowledge, roughly what we call science, are often substituted for philosophy, while certain aspects of philosophy (a large part of the social sciences) are considered as science. If the United States is to live up to its responsibilities in the post-war years, it must foster all learning—accumulative knowledge, philosophy and poetry, including literature and the fine arts. So far as is humanly possible, all the potential talent in these manifold activities must be recognized at an early age and given adequate educational opportunity. Dealing more specifically with the physical sciences, Dr. Conant stressed the dependence, here as elsewhere, of the rate of advance on the number of really first-class men engaged, and he urged the institution of a national scholarship programme for young men who gave promise of becoming leaders in science and technology. For the most effective scientific advance in the applied fields, he believes there must be keen and strong rivalry between a number of strong and independent groups, but since we must look to the universities for the fundamental advances to be applied later and for the trained men required, industrial concerns and research institutes should beware of making too heavy demands on the universities for either time or their most promising men. Again, the mobile striking power of scientific talent required to exploit new advances resides ideally in the universities, but for the last twenty-five years the American universities had suffered from two great evils: their system of making life appointments, which so often fails to distinguish between men of real ability and men of medium competence; and the tendency to overburden the former with undergraduate teaching. Dr. Conant looks to the professional societies to play a leading part in forming the public opinion required to correct both these faults. With regard to funds, Dr. Conant believes it is more important for the universities to be able to find really first-rate investigators worthy of support than to find funds to support investigations.

Scientific Film Association

THE first annual general meeting of the Scientific Film Association was held on November 25 in London. The chairman, Mr. Arthur Elton, proposing the adoption of the annual report, stressed the need for critical appreciation in the field of scientific films. He pointed out that the world of publishing has an elaborate organization for criticism and documentation of every book directly it is published; without some such machinery, the film will remain an ephemeral thing instead of being part of our national culture. He suggested that this deficiency in the scientific film might be made good by the Scientific Film Association, which is now publishing a catalogue of such films. Mr. Elton said that a North of England Section has been formed of the Association and that considerable interest has been shown in the United States and Canada. The Canadian Government has appointed a representative in Ottawa to cater for interest there in scientific films. Mr. Elton hopes that the Association will play its part in the international exchange of information by films. In the discussion which followed, members stressed the importance of developing the work of the standing committees of the Association dealing with medical, educational and industrial films. The problems of criticism and appraisal of scientific films were discussed and a request was made for specimen programmes for scientific film societies. A short film on Brownian movement made at the Glasgow Technical College, and the new film "Children of the City" and two

British Council films from the Central Film Library, "Life Cycle of the Maize" and "Development of the Rabbit", were shown.

Russian Astronomy Resurgent

A TELEGRAM from Moscow gives the news that the Astronomical Council of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. has already made a start on the task of rebuilding those Russian astronomical institutions which have suffered at German hands. Plans are being made both for the reconstruction of wrecked observatory buildings and for the design of new ones. A workshop under the direction of Prof. D. D. Midsutov, builder of the telescope with all-spherical surfaces, has been organized for the design of instruments and construction of scale models. The rebuilding of Poulkovo Observatory will begin in the near future: the new buildings, especially that which will house the great refractor, are designed to meet all the requirements of modern astronomical technique.

A site has been selected for the projected Central Asiatic Observatory on Zaili, a spur of the Ala Tau Mountains near Alma Ata. This observatory is not to be confused with the new astrophysical one, plans of which have already been drawn up, which in its scope and equipment is to be on a level with the best modern observatories. The site for this latter institution will probably be in the Crimea. The Ukrainian Academy of Sciences has decided to build a new observatory near Kiev, and Simeiz Observatory is already being rebuilt. In Moscow an astronomical laboratory is being established where visiting astronomers will be able to calibrate their photometric apparatus. The Leningrad Astronomical Institute will in future engage in purely theoretical work, including an attack on some problems in celestial mechanics, and will publish such periodical works as annual ephemerides.

Total Solar Eclipse of June 9, 1945

A SOVIET broadcast announces that a commission set up by the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. to observe the total solar eclipse of June 9 next year has opened its first plenary session in Moscow. Prominent astronomers from Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and other cities are taking part in the scheme. The band of totality passes from America through Norway, Sweden and Finland, crossing into Soviet territory near Lake Ladoga, and then stretching through Yaroslavl, Ivanovo, south of Gorki and Kuibyshev and north of Uralsk. The longest period of totality in the U.S.S.R. will be near Lake Ladoga, where it will last 61 seconds. Twenty Soviet expeditions are being organized. The Sternberg Astronomical Institute and similar bodies in Kiev, Kharkov and Kazan are to take part. Most of the sites of the expeditions are concentrated in the areas of Rybinsk and Yaroslavl. Preparations for observing the eclipse are also well forward in Sweden. A paper by Grönstrand, which is to appear in the *Annals* of the Stockholm Observatory, gives the circumstances of the eclipse in northern Sweden, and a party led by Lindblad plans to observe the flash spectrum.

University of Melbourne

THE trustees of the estate of the late E. L. Baillieu have given the University of Melbourne £A105,000 for a new library to commemorate Mr. Baillieu's brother, the late W. L. Baillieu.

The following appointments have recently been made: Dr. L. H. Martin, formerly associate professor of physics in the University, but recently on leave for special duties under the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, to be professor of physics; Dr. E. S. Hills, hitherto associate professor of geology in the University, to be professor of geology and mineralogy; Dr. S. Dattilo Rubbo, hitherto senior lecturer in bacteriology in the University, to be professor of bacteriology.

Director of Army Education

BRIGADIER CYRIL LLOYD has been appointed director of army education under the Director-General, Mr. P. R. Morris. Brigadier Lloyd was educated at Brighton Grammar School and at the University of London, where he took his B.Sc. with first-class honours in 1926. He taught at Sir George Monoux Grammar School and later at Brighton Grammar School until the outbreak of war.

Announcements

MR. D. A. OLIVER, research director of William Jessop and Sons, Ltd., and J. J. Saville and Co., Ltd., Sheffield, while continuing in this position, has also been appointed director of research to the Birmingham Small Arms Group, of which Jessops and Savilles form part. The B.S.A. Group research activities, in addition to being carried on in the existing laboratories situated at the different works of the Group, notably the Daimler Co., Ltd., Coventry, the B.S.A. Co., Ltd., Small Heath, Birmingham, and B.S.A. Tools, Ltd., Birmingham, are to be considerably expanded. Recent additions to the research staff include Dr. A. J. Bradley, formerly of the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge, and Mr. P. H. Lawrence, formerly of the Ministry of Aircraft Production, London.

THE Clough Memorial Research Fund, which was instituted in 1935 for the purpose of encouraging geological research in Scotland and the north of England, provides a sum of approximately £30 annually. Applications for grants are invited for the period April 1, 1945–March 31, 1946, and should state (1) the nature of the research to be undertaken; (2) the amount of grant desired; (3) the specific purpose for which the grant will be used, for example, travelling expenses, maintenance in field, excavation of critical sections, etc.; (4) whether any other grant-in-aid has been obtained or applied for. Applications must be in the hands of the Secretary, Clough Memorial Research Fund Committee, Edinburgh Geological Society, Synod Hall, Castle Terrace, Edinburgh, not later than March 1, 1945.

THE Summary of Current Technological Developments issued by the U.S. Department of Labour is prepared each month by the Productivity and Technological Development Division of the Bureau of Labour Statistics. Started at the end of 1941, it summarizes recent changes in processes, materials and manufacturing techniques as reported in current trade and technical periodicals, of which about two hundred are now covered each month. In addition to short abstracts of the articles or notes appearing in the periodicals cited, brief special reports are frequently presented on matters of current interest, based on a number of sources or on the work of the Division. The February 1944 issue, for example, includes a fifth article in a series on labour utilization, dealing with employee training and upgrading.