

## NEWS and VIEWS

## British Representatives at Soviet Academy Celebrations

At the invitation of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., transmitted through the Ambassador of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the Court of St. James, a party of scientific men and scholars left England for the U.S.S.R. on June 14 to participate in the celebration of the two hundred and twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. The foundation of this Academy was in some measure due to the visit which Peter the Great paid to England in 1698, when he met men like Evelyn and Halley, who were then prominent members of the Royal Society of London. The following are taking part: Prof. N. K. Adam; Prof. E. N. da C. Andrade (representing the Physical Society, also the University of London); Prof. E. D. Adrian (also representing the University of Cambridge); Prof. J. D. Bernal; Prof. P. M. S. Blackett; Prof. Max Born; Prof. V. Gordon Childe (also representing the Royal Society of Edinburgh); Dr. E. M. Crowther, Sir Charles Darwin (also representing the Institution of Naval Architects); Prof. P. A. M. Dirac; Prof. F. G. Donnan (also representing the Chemical Society); Mr. W. N. Edwards; Prof. C. N. Hinshelwood (also representing the University of Oxford); Sir Thomas Holland (representing the Geological Society); Dr. J. S. Huxley; Sir Harold Spencer Jones (Astronomer Royal); Prof. E. A. Milne; Prof. N. F. Mott; Dr. Alex Muir; Prof. R. G. W. Norrish; Dr. W. G. Ogg; Lord Radnor (representing the Rothamsted Experimental Station); Prof. E. K. Rideal; Sir Robert Robinson (representing the Royal Society of London); Prof. A. Sorsby (representing the Anglo-Soviet Medical Council); Prof. R. H. Tawney; Dr. Henry Thomas (representing the British Museum); Prof. D. M. S. Watson (also representing the British Association); Dr. W. A. Wooster (representing the Association of Scientific Workers).

## James Alfred Ewing Medal:

## Award to Mr. B. N. Wallis

On the joint recommendation of the presidents of the Royal Society and the Institution of Civil Engineers, the Council of the Institution of Civil Engineers has awarded the James Alfred Ewing Medal for 1944 to Mr. B. N. Wallis. The Medal is awarded annually for specially meritorious contributions to the science of engineering in the field of research. Mr. Wallis is chief of aeronautical research and development to Vickers-Armstrongs, Ltd. He invented and designed the special type of bomb used for the destruction of the Moehne and Eder Dams in Germany in 1943, and designed the Tallboy and 10-ton bombs used by the R.A.F. He was responsible for the design and construction of the airship *R.100*. Since the airship programme was abandoned, he has been engaged in the design and development of geodetic construction to enable the production of long-range load-carrying aircraft, as exemplified in the production, in collaboration with Mr. R. K. Pierson, of the "Wellesley" type monoplane, which holds the world's non-stop record of 7,162 miles made in 1938. Geodetic construction has been used in the well-known "Wellington" bomber and the "Warwick".

## Geology at Columbia University: Prof. S. J. Shand

PROF. S. J. SHAND has been appointed to fill the Newberry chair of geology at Columbia University. Shand, a graduate of the Universities of St. Andrews and Münster, spent a short time at the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh, and then for twenty-five years was professor of geology at Stellenbosch. In 1937 he became professor of petrology in Columbia. He has devoted much attention to the occurrence and origin of the alkali rocks. He mapped masses of nepheline-bearing rocks in Sutherlandshire and the Bushveld, describing them in a series of masterly papers. As early as 1913 he was considering the thorny problems of the classification of eruptive rocks, and has recently elaborated one. In this the role of physical chemistry in helping to choose the diagnostic features of a rock is emphasized, and the result is practical and useful. A philosophical outlook permeates all he writes, and he has proved himself one of the most stimulating of living petrologists. Many geologists and others will be happy to learn of his promotion, and know he is a worthy successor to J. F. Kemp, C. P. Berkey and Douglas Johnson.

## Industry and the University:

## Exchange of Research Personnel

THE London, Midland and Scottish Railway has announced an important scheme whereby it will send members of its research staff for varying periods to carry out fundamental research in their particular fields in university laboratories; and, in exchange, the universities will be invited to send members of their staffs to spend a period in the company's research laboratory at Derby, working on applied problems in which they are interested from the fundamental side. The benefits should be felt by both parties to this arrangement. On one hand, it is hoped that the company's staff visiting the universities will be invited to assist in teaching, so bringing the practical atmosphere to the university lecture-room; on the other hand, university research men will be brought more closely into contact with the problems of industry. The L.M.S. Research Laboratory has a staff of seventy research workers, and has sections dealing with engineering, metallurgy, chemistry, physics, paint and textiles; hence it can provide a very varied experience for university research workers able to take advantage of the scheme. The company is to be congratulated on its foresight in promoting this exchange of research workers; it should prove an important step in promoting that two-way flow of research personnel between industry and the university, the need for which has been emphasized repeatedly in recent months. The example might well be followed in other industries.

## Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal

IN the editorial article "Science and Progress in India" in *Nature* of May 5, p. 525, the history of the development of the present scientific background in India since the end of the eighteenth century is traced along two parallel lines of progress, official and non-official, the origin of the latter being the foundation of the Asiatic Society (now the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal) by Sir William Jones in 1784. The annual address of Dr. Shyam Prasad Mookerjee, president of the Society for the year 1944-45, has now been received, as well as the annual report of the Council. It is pleasing that Dr. Mookerjee, the son of the late Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee,

one of the greatest presidents the Society has ever had, should have reached the presidential chair. An interesting point that emerges from Dr. Mookerjee's address is that while official support was given to some aspects of science in India from as early a date as that of the birth of the Asiatic Society, the study of the cultural inheritance of India was left entirely to private non-official effort, both European and Indian, largely under the inspiration and encouragement of the Asiatic Society, until so late a date as 1860. In this year, during the time of Lord Canning, the first Viceroy of India, the Archaeological Survey of Northern India was constituted, while in 1862 Cunningham was appointed archaeological surveyor, to become later the first director-general of archaeology in India. After Cunningham came a period of stagnation until Lord Curzon reconstituted the Archaeological Department under Sir John Marshall. But the study of India's history as represented by ancient documents is still left to unofficial endeavour, organized mainly by the Asiatic Society, to which some official help is given in the form of annual grants towards the cost of study and publication.

Now that proposals are on foot for the expansion of scientific, medical and industrial research in India, the Asiatic Society, with its interests in all branches of learning—science and letters—does not propose to allow the cultural side of life to lag behind. For, as Dr. Mookerjee says, "neither can India attain her full strength and glory nor can she contribute worthily to the cause of stabilizing human civilization, if we ignore the need for a proper cultural reconstruction in India". The Council of the Society, working through an advisory body formed for the purpose, has in consequence submitted to the Government of India during 1944 proposals on (1) the establishment of a Travellers' Department in India; (2) the necessity for a Central Record Office in Bengal; (3) the future development of the Archaeological Department; (4) the establishment of a National Museum at New Delhi as a war memorial; (5) the amendment of the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act; (6) the establishment of a School of Architecture in India; (7) the necessity for a National Cultural Trust; (8) the establishment of a National Academy of Art and Letters; (9) the constitution of national parks. These projects are for the future. As a useful activity for the present the Society has organized a series of discussion meetings to which invitations have been extended to all members of the Allied Forces in Calcutta. No less than thirty-nine meetings were held during 1944, addressed by a variety of lecturers on historical, literary, economic, industrial, and scientific subjects. The British and American military authorities co-operated in making these meetings a success, the one by a contribution towards the expenses, and the other by gifts of materials for providing refreshments. The Asiatic Society of Bengal proposes next year to celebrate the bi-centenary of the birth of its founder, Sir William Jones.

#### Astronomy in France during the Occupation

In the February issue of *The Observatory* (66, 23; 1945), D. Chalonge gives a brief history of French astronomy and astronomers during the German occupation. Among the astronomers dismissed under the Vichy racial decrees—M. Lambert, director of the Bureau International de l'Heure, M. Mendès, M. Beloritzky and Mlle. Bloch, assistants at the

Observatories of Bordeaux, Marseilles and Lyons respectively—all have been reinstated except M. Lambert, who was arrested in August 1943 and deported to Germany, and about whose safety there is anxiety. M. Mineur, director of the Institut d'Astrophysique, was several times imprisoned for political reasons. Removed by the Vichy Government from his post at the Observatory of Paris, he devoted much of his time to the resistance movement, and is now back with his former colleagues. M. Danjon, director of the Observatory of Strasbourg and dean of the Faculty of Science in the University, was also many times arrested by the Germans during the Gestapo campaign against the University, and was finally dismissed by the Vichy Government. Many astronomers were, however, allowed to work in the tranquillity of their observatories. In some cases this tranquillity covered patriotic activities, the observatories becoming meeting-places for the local resistance groups where pamphlets were printed and arms stored. Observatory buildings throughout France have come through the War unscathed, except perhaps those at Strasbourg, about which news is still lacking.

Development of the Service d'Astrophysique, founded in 1936, was interrupted by the outbreak of war. The Institut d'Astrophysique buildings in Paris were finished externally in 1940 when the Germans forbade further work, but this edict was clandestinely evaded with such success that workshops and laboratories were ready for use by January 1944. At the Observatory of Haute Provence, which forms part of the Service d'Astrophysique, many of the projected buildings were completed, and a 120-cm. telescope was brought into use a year ago. An 80-cm. telescope will shortly be installed in a dome already awaiting it. Work has continued on the Pic du Midi, where Lyot has carried on his researches on the solar corona outside eclipse and on planetary surface detail. Other researches published or to be published in the *Annales d'Astrophysique* include work on the night sky spectrum; photometric and spectrophotometric studies of lunar eclipses; investigations, observational and theoretical, on the continuous spectra of stars and diffuse nebulae; observations of total hydrogen absorption in certain stellar spectra; and a study of the monochromatic brightness across the sun's disk.

#### Public Health in San Salvador

An article on this subject appears in the February issue of the *Boletín de la Oficina Sanitaria Pan-americana* by Dr. Manuel Zúñiga Idiáquez, head of the Department of Health Education of the El Salvador Ministry of Health. San Salvador's public health organization traces its origin to the Superior Board of Health at the beginning of this century, which was succeeded in 1920 by the National Department of Health. Since then much progress has been made as regards the preventive, rather than the curative, side of public health and the training of staff. The Rockefeller Foundation and the Pan-American Sanitary Bureau have been of great help, especially as regards the formation of a body of specialists in public health. At the present time valuable aid is also being received from the Co-operative Inter-American Public Health Service, permitting the installation of safe water and sewage disposal systems, malaria control work, sanitary materials, public laundries and new buildings and health centres.