

standing and homely hospitality that are not forgotten by his old American students.

In 1933 Grabau re-visited America and was pleased at his welcome and at renewing personal contact with his old friends and antagonists, Foerste and Ulrich. Though some of the old narrow prejudices persisted even later in some quarters, this visit did much to relieve the mental suffering he had so long endured. By then he was already painfully crippled by rheumatism which progressively worsened. He kept bravely on, however, and it is remarkable that such a mass of research work and of ideas could have been produced by one who suffered so severely. The Japanese invasion of China brought increasing difficulties to Grabau. When the Geological Survey and the

National University of Peking moved to Kunming, Yunnan, in 1937, his illness forced him to be left behind; but he struggled on, formulating and publishing his ideas, while his Chinese friends got food and money to him whenever possible. After the Pearl Harbour incident, he was housed by the Japanese in the old British Embassy in Peking, but the lack of food and attention and his utter hatred of the Japanese aggression told heavily on the old man. He was very ill bodily and mentally when he was liberated in September, 1945, and despite the care of the authorities of the Geological Survey, he died on March 20, 1946, after internal hæmorrhage. He was a widower with one daughter.

H. DIGHTON THOMAS

NEWS and VIEWS

Newton Tercentenary Celebrations

THE three hundredth anniversary of the birth of Isaac Newton fell on December 25, 1942. At that time an international celebration to mark the occasion was out of the question, but the Royal Society devoted the greater part of its anniversary meeting on November 30 of that year to lectures on Newton and his work. Sir Henry Dale, who was president of the Royal Society at that time, spoke in general terms of the significance of Newton as an outstanding figure in the progress of Western science and philosophy. Lectures were given by Prof. E. N. da C. Andrade, Lord Rayleigh and Sir James Jeans, which we were able to print in *Nature* of December 19, with an article by Prof. S. Brodetsky on Newton as scientist and man. The Physical Society and other learned bodies also had special lectures.

As announced by Sir Robert Robinson in opening the Royal Society Empire Scientific Conference, the Society arranged to hold a celebration of wider scope which began on July 15. Delegates from many foreign academies were present and also representatives attending the recent Empire Scientific Conference. The delegates were welcomed by Sir Robert Robinson, who stated in the course of his address that the Royal Society has recently proposed to the British Government a scheme for an Isaac Newton observatory as a national memorial. The scheme provides for a 100-in. reflector and other modern astronomical equipment. The observatory would be the property of the Government, but it would be available for the use of investigators from other observatories. Among the addresses and gifts presented to the Royal Society on this occasion was a copy of a Russian translation of the "Principia" presented by the delegation from the U.S.S.R.

Other items from the programme of the week's celebrations were lectures by Prof. E. N. da C. Andrade on "Isaac Newton"; by the late Lord Keynes (read by Mr. Geoffrey Keynes) on "Newton, the Man"; by Prof. J. Hadamard on "Newton and the Infinitesimal Calculus"; by Academician S. Vavilov (read on his behalf) on "Newton's Atomism"; by Prof. Niels Bohr on "Newton's Principles and Modern Atomic Mechanics"; by Prof. H. W. Turnbull on "Newton: The Algebraist and Geometer"; by Dr. Walter Adams on "Newton's Contributions to Observational Astronomy"; by Dr. Jerome C. Hunsaker on "Newton and Fluid Mechanics". The

King and Queen invited delegates to a garden party, and there were visits to the Covent Garden Opera House for a performance by the Ballet Theatre of New York, to Cambridge and the Royal Mint, and a reception by the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City of London.

British Commonwealth Scientific Official Conference

MR. HERBERT MORRISON, Lord President of the Council, opened the British Commonwealth Scientific Conference on July 9. He said that the Royal Society Conference which had just closed was an admirable preparation for the official Conference, in that it provided many opportunities for both formal and informal discussions. Mr. Morrison suggested that a guiding principle in dealing with any problem before the official Conference should be, first, what it is desired to achieve, and then how the desired results can be best brought about and what additional machinery, if any, is necessary for the purpose. It is possible, he warned, to pay too much attention to organisation. If there is the will to co-operate (and there is abundant evidence that this exists throughout the Commonwealth), then very frequently the means follow naturally. It is important to remember, he said, that throughout the British Commonwealth we shall be faced for some years to come with an acute shortage of scientific man-power; and there is a risk that too elaborate organisation may result in absorbing into the administrative machine many scientifically trained men who are badly needed in research laboratories. Careful distinction must also be made between subjects on which work can be safely left to develop along its own lines in the individual countries of the Commonwealth and Empire, and subjects in which successful collaboration demands closely similar methods being employed by all engaged in the work. In the former case, full collaboration can be achieved by ensuring that individual investigators, wherever they may be working, know what others are doing and are able to meet at intervals for discussion of results. The other type of work requires the adoption of concerted plans of action. Mr. Morrison pledged the Government to give most careful and sympathetic consideration to recommendations made by the Conference; and he declared that the Government is determined that science shall play its proper part in the formation