

Scientific Appointments at the Ministry of Supply

SIR BEN LOCKSPEISER, director-general of scientific research (air) at the Ministry of Supply, has been appointed chief scientist to the Ministry. This newly created post is a continuation of the co-ordination of the research and development programmes for defence and air resulting from the merger earlier this year of the Ministry of Supply and the Ministry of Aircraft Production. Sir Ben will be responsible in future for co-ordinating research work on the Ministry's military and aeronautical programmes, and for supervising the general interests and welfare of its large scientific staff. He will be assisted in these duties by the Scientific Co-ordinating Board, to which Sir John Lennard-Jones has agreed to continue to act as chairman for the present. The Ministry has also announced that the following four appointments, all at Principal Director level, will be incorporated in its higher organisation for research and development: *Scientific Research (Air)*: Mr. H. M. Garner, who has held a number of posts in the scientific departments of the Air Ministry, Ministry of Aircraft Production and Ministry of Supply since his entry into Government service soon after the First World War; between 1942 and 1945 he was deputy director of scientific research in the Ministry of Aircraft Production. *Technical Development (Defence)*: Mr. T. R. B. Sanders, who served with the Royal Artillery in the early part of the War, later becoming assistant chief engineer of armaments design in the Ministry of Supply. *Scientific Research (Defence)*: Dr. E. T. Paris, who joined the Ministry of Supply upon its formation in 1939, previously having been deputy director of scientific research at the War Office; prior to taking up his present appointment he was controller of physical and signal development in the Ministry of Supply, being responsible (under the Director-General of Scientific Research and Development) for all Army signals and radar development. *Technical Development (Air)*: Mr. S. Scott-Hall, who from 1944 until taking up his present post was superintendent of performance testing at the Aeroplane and Armaments Experimental Establishment, Boscombe Down, Wiltshire; between 1941 and 1944 he was head of the Armament Research and Development Department of the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough.

The Ministry of Supply further announces that responsibility for all branches of research and development concerning guided projectiles—including the proposed range in Australia—are to be integrated under the Controller of Supplies (Air). Details of the new organisation will be given in due course.

National Coal Board: Director of Carbonization Research

THE National Coal Board announces that Prof. H. L. Riley, professor of inorganic and physical chemistry in the University of Durham, has been appointed director of carbonization research under the scientific member of the Board, Sir Charles Ellis. Prof. Riley studied at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, and took an honours degree in inorganic chemistry; he was awarded the Frank Haddon Prize. He held a Beit Research Fellowship during 1921-23, and remained as lecturer at the Imperial College until he went in 1932 to King's College, University of Durham. Prof. Riley's research work at Newcastle has been devoted to the study of coking problems, and he is recognized as an expert

in this field. He is also honorary secretary and director of research to the Northern Coke Research Committee, and is a member of the British Coking Research Association. He is forty-seven years of age.

Chemistry at Chelsea Polytechnic: Dr. J. F. J. Dippy

WHEN Dr. C. Doree retired from the post of head of the Department of Chemistry at the Chelsea Polytechnic in 1940, the vacancy was filled by the promotion of Dr. J. C. Crocker, then first assistant in the Department; Dr. Crocker retired at the end of August. Dr. John F. J. Dippy has now been appointed to the post. Educated at University College, Swansea, Dr. Dippy showed early promise as a research worker, and his work has been well recognized in Great Britain and in the United States. He is an energetic man with interests in both pure and applied chemistry. Beginning with a lectureship in chemistry at the Cardiff Technical College (1930), Dr. Dippy moved to a headship at the Mining and Technical College, Wigan (1942), and is at present head of the Department of Chemistry and Biology at the South-East Essex Technical College, Dagenham (since 1945). He has high academic and administrative ability.

Agricultural Attaché at the British Embassy in Buenos Ayres

MAJOR T. A. RATTRAY has been appointed agricultural attaché to the British Embassy in Buenos Ayres. Major Rattray, who is fifty-seven, was educated at Winchester. After service in the First World War, he farmed in Shropshire and Somerset until, in 1934, he took up an appointment with the Ministry of Agriculture as a livestock officer. From 1939 onwards Major Rattray has acted as one of the Ministry's land commissioners.

Reports on German Industrial and Scientific Progress

IN a written answer to a question regarding reports on German industrial and scientific progress on December 5, the President of the Board of Trade stated that 1,390 such reports have been published to date, 52 by British teams, 278 by American teams and 1,060 by combined teams, and it is expected that the total would approach 2,500. In addition to placing the reports on sale at H.M. Stationery Office, free distributions of all reports published are made to universities, the principal public libraries and chambers of commerce. Trade and research associations and learned professional institutions also receive a token free distribution of the reports of direct interest to them. Arrangements have been made with the Stationery Office to produce both a classified list of the reports and a subject index, and an Information Bureau and Reference Library has also been created at the secretariat of the British Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee, which body is now administered by the Board of Trade. This Reference Library contains not only all the finished reports but also much of the raw material on which they were based. The work is closely co-ordinated with the Documents Unit of the Board of Trade, which is the central repository for the large quantity of original German documents collected in the British and allied investigations. The Unit has facilities for translating and abstracting and

for supplying copies of the abstracts or of the original documents to any interested party, and this Information Service, with a nucleus technical staff and access both to the reports and to the original German documents, should be of great assistance to firms with limited research facilities. Publicity is being given to this service and facilities by an exhibition opened at the Board of Trade at Millbank, London, on December 10; the exhibition will eventually be shown in the most important provincial industrial centres of Britain.

Centenary of the Sewing Machine

SEWING needles of bone date back to prehistoric times, and the steel needle made its first appearance in Britain in the sixteenth century. The speed of expert hand-sewing, thirty stitches per minute, is slow and laborious compared with that of machine work, and with the ushering in of the mechanical age in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is not surprising that the invention and development of the sewing machine should have come about early in this period. A chain-stitch machine with its single thread had already been made by B. Thimmonier, in 1830, and a machine produced by W. Hunt, in 1832-34, had an eye-pointed needle and an oscillating shuttle. It remained for Elias Howe to make and patent, in 1845, the first successful lock-stitch machine, in which an eye-pointed needle and an independent shuttle, each with its own thread, were used. He disposed of his English interests in the patent to William Frederick Thomas, of Cheapside, in whose name the British patent stands, dated December 1, 1846. The Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, is commemorating the occasion of the centenary by holding a small exhibition of sewing machines. Thanks to the generosity of Mr. A. W. Pickard, of Glasgow, the Museum has in its collection one of the first six of the 1846-type machines, which were made by Howe. A number of other machines of dates ranging over the complete century of development are shown. These include early Howe and also Wheeler and Wilson machines, while modern development is illustrated by the latest domestic and workroom models of the Singer Sewing Machine Co.

University of Birmingham

THE pro-chancellor of the University of Birmingham, Mr. Edmund P. Beale, is retiring after having held office since 1939. Mr. Beale, whose father was the first vice-chancellor of the University, became a member of the University Council in 1924 and was treasurer from 1930 until 1939. To commemorate his services, Mr. Beale has been presented with a portrait of himself, painted by Mr. A. Middleton Todd. The chancellor of the University, Mr. Anthony Eden, who made the presentation on behalf of the subscribers, paid a warm tribute to the work done by Mr. and Mrs. Beale for the University. The success of the recent appeal for funds, in response to which more than £1,000,000 has already been subscribed towards the £1,500,000 asked for, owes much to Mr. Beale's personal efforts. The vice-chancellor, Dr. Raymond Priestley, said that when he came to Birmingham he was somewhat prejudiced both against a lay element in a university council and lay honorary officers; but he now believes it to be the best possible system for a university like that of Birmingham. Mr. Beale, he said, typified integrity, loyalty and grit, and "one who can appreciate—as

not all laymen do—academic standards and ideals. He has stood for a university of national and international standards both of teaching and research."

The newly formed Department of Chemical Engineering in the University of Birmingham is giving special attention to the problems of fuel technology and the utilization of coal. On the occasion of a recent visit of more than a hundred executives of the gas and allied industries, the vice-chancellor emphasized the importance of making the best possible use of our remaining supplies of coal and high-grade iron ore. "We must capitalize," Dr. Priestley said, "our best brains, our national skill, and the faculty for the co-ordination of hand and brain in which, as a people, we are endowed, I believe, beyond most others, and it is in these fields that this university plans to help."

Organisation for the Interchange of Technical Publications in Sheffield

A REPORT on the war-time work of the Organisation for the Interchange of Technical Publications in Sheffield was presented to the annual general meeting held in the Sheffield Central Library on November 5. This Organisation provides the framework for a system of co-operation between the Sheffield City Libraries, the University Library and other research libraries in the area, and the libraries maintained by local firms. Through its agency any member library, research workers employed by member firms, or accredited students at the constituent libraries, can draw on the pooled resources of the twenty-nine libraries included in the Organisation. Some of the member libraries are of such a highly specialized nature and cover so small a field (although in minute detail) that they rely largely on the extensive resources of the Science and Technology Department of the City Library in matters outside the range of their own material. Hence, as the largest contributor to the pool, the tasks of administering the scheme and of preparing research bibliographies on specific aspects of research (a service not, however, confined to members of the Organisation) fall on the City Libraries. The close collaboration between the highly specialized works libraries and research staffs and the City Library allows the latter to benefit from the advice of experts in the selection of books and in the preparation of its research publications. From the beginning of the War until November 1946, 8,163 books, periodicals, etc., were recorded as being interchanged by members, but the actual figures of loans were much higher.

At the annual general meeting, applications for membership from the Bragg Laboratory of the Admiralty, the Davy and United Engineering Company, Hall and Pickles, Ltd., Edward Pryor and Son, Ltd., and the Sheffield and District Gas Company were approved, bringing the total number to six society and twenty-three works members. It was also decided to investigate the possibility of obtaining research services in foreign patents through the Fédération Internationale de Documentation at The Hague. Resolutions were passed asking the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux to urge the Patent Office to publish indexes and abridgments to British patent specifications of the war years, and to make representations to the appropriate Government department on the desirability of providing a national loan service of standards specifications from all countries.