

much to the gradual change of leather production from a chancy industrial art to a sequence of processes scientifically controlled.

Miss Jordan Lloyd was perhaps unique among the scientific women of her time—a vigorous and vivacious leader of her mixed team both in triumph and tribulation (for her laboratories were twice wrecked in the 'blitz' on Bermondsey); a clear thinker and good speaker with a constructive mind; a manager with ability to delegate; a research worker herself who displayed an arresting interest in the investigations of many others; and with a demeanour and practical outlook in the tanneries which appealed to the employers and their technicians. She can have perhaps no more fitting epitaph—and one possibly no more welcome to her—than the impressive volumes now appearing which describe the results of twenty-five years of research for the British leather

industry by the British Leather Manufacturers' Research Association under her inspiring leadership.
ROBERT H. PICKARD

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Dr. F. F. Blackman, F.R.S., formerly reader in botany in the University of Cambridge, on January 30, aged eighty.

Prof. James H. Leuba, emeritus professor of psychology at Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, on December 8, aged seventy-eight.

Prof. L. W. Lyde, since 1928 emeritus professor of geography in the University of London, on January 24, aged eighty-three.

Dr. F. B. Mumford, emeritus dean of the College of Agriculture, University of Missouri, on November 12, aged seventy-eight.

NEWS and VIEWS

Advisory Council on Scientific Policy: Sir Henry Tizard, K.C.B., F.R.S.

MR. ARTHUR GREENWOOD, Lord Privy Seal, has announced in a Parliamentary written reply that it has been decided, in addition to the establishment of the Defence Research Policy Committee, to set up on the civil side an Advisory Council on Scientific Policy to advise the Lord President of the Council in the exercise of his responsibility for the formulation and execution of Government scientific policy. The chairman will be Sir Henry Tizard, who is also chairman of the Defence Committee, and the staffs of the two bodies will work in close association. The Council will include the heads of the principal Government scientific organisations and a number of scientific workers from outside the Government service. The former Scientific Advisory Committee will now cease to exist. The latter, it will be recalled, was set up in October 1940, and consisted of the president and secretaries of the Royal Society, and the secretaries of the chief Government research departments, under the chairmanship of Lord Hankey. In the new Advisory Council the choice of membership has been somewhat extended, but presumably its functions will be roughly the same.

As chairman of the Defence Research Policy Committee and also of the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy, Sir Henry Tizard will occupy a unique position in the scientific life of Great Britain. For this he is admirably fitted. Apart from a distinguished academic record which gave promise of exceptional ability, his work during and after the First World War in aeronautical research and his influence on British aircraft development made him well known in scientific and engineering circles. A short period (1927-29) as permanent secretary of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research when that Department was becoming established gave him first-hand knowledge of State administrative machinery. From 1929 until 1942 he was rector of the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, and since 1942 he has been president of Magdalen College, Oxford. Thus he has unusual experience in scientific, engineering and administrative fields such as few can boast, which makes the choice of Sir Henry for the chairmanship of the new bodies for the organisation of defence and scientific research a particularly appropriate one.

Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931)

THOMAS ALVA EDISON was born in the then village of Milan, Ohio, on February 11, 1847, and died at West Orange, New Jersey, on October 18, 1931, at the age of eighty-four. Many years before Edison's death, Sir Richard Gregory wrote in his "Discovery, or the Spirit and Service of Science", "Thomas A. Edison is the embodiment of the method of specialised research with a practical purpose. By quickness of perception, fertility of resource, and persistent trial of everything until the best means of achieving his end has been found, he has become the leading inventor in the world." It is not far short of seventy years since the journalists of America raised him to the status of a sort of national hero. His first triumph was achieved when as a boy of fifteen he set up, printed and published a newspaper on a running train. By twenty-one he had secured the first of his thousands of patents and resigned an appointment with a telegraph company in order to bring out his inventions. From that time, patent followed patent, and in 1876 he founded the famous laboratory at Menlo Park, New Jersey, where he employed both men of science and men of skill to carry out his ideas. In quick succession came a series of innovations in telegraphy and telephony, the phonograph, photography, and in all that appertained to the generation, distribution and utilization of electricity. All that he did has to be studied with a knowledge of what had been and was being done by others, for he always made the fullest use of contemporary discoveries.

It was largely through the exhibition of Edison's 'Jumbo' dynamos and the incandescent lamp, in the United States and at the Paris Exhibition, that his reputation became world-wide. From his work on these things sprang the plans for the Pearl Street Electric Power Station in New York and the similar station at Holborn Viaduct, London, both of which were put into operation in 1882 for lighting the neighbouring streets and business premises. Some four hundred lamps in the telegraph operating room in the General Post Office, Newgate Street, were supplied with current from Holborn Circus. Edison was only thirty-five at this time, but he was probably at the height of his powers. His work and list of patents taken out afterwards, however, is impressive. In fertility of ideas he was perhaps only rivalled by his countryman Hiram Maxim. In later life he was

accorded many honours, but he probably appreciated as much as any the award to him in 1892 of the Albert Medal by the Royal Society of Arts. Only one American, Eads, the great bridge builder, had received it previously. Of Dutch descent on his father's side, Edison came of a long-lived family, and he could tire out any of his staff. His mother, to whom his debt was great, was of Canadian-Scottish descent. He himself was twice married and had six children. The Menlo Park laboratory has now been removed to Mr. Henry Ford's Industrial Museum at Dearborn, Michigan; it is a worthy memorial.

New York Academy of Medicine: Centenary Celebrations

THE first meeting of the New York Academy of Medicine was held on January 6, 1847, when the founders dedicated themselves to the establishment of an institution for the improvement of medical education, the advancement of the public health, the elimination of quackery and malpractice and the instruction of the public on matters of health and hygiene. Centenary celebrations will begin on March 6, with an assembly of the fellowship and the friends of the Academy, when the centennial discourse will be delivered by Prof. John A. Ryle, head of the Institute of Social Medicine at Oxford, who will speak on "Social Pathology and the New Era in Medicine". Following this meeting, a series of activities in the Academy building have been planned which will continue throughout March and April. Each of the eleven sections of the Academy will celebrate the centennial with a dinner of its own members, followed by a meeting in which eminent authorities in the specialty will participate. Each of the Academy's standing committees has arranged for a three-day conference, dealing with post-graduate medical education, public health, social medicine, hospitals and medical libraries respectively.

Various affiliated clinical and scientific societies such as the Harvey Society, the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine, the New York Academy of Sciences and the New York Chapter of the American Chemical Society have accepted invitations to hold meetings in the Academy building during the period of the celebration. A historical exhibit of the Academy and its role in medical progress over the past one hundred years is being assembled and will be on view in the Academy throughout March and April. An exhibit is also being assembled in collaboration with the New York City Planning Commission and hospital authorities dealing with the history of the older municipal and voluntary hospitals of the city, at which plans for their post-war development will be shown. Special public exhibits on medical and historical subjects are being arranged at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the New York Public Library, the New York Historical Society, the Museum of the City of New York and at private art galleries which possess famous prints, collections and other *memorabilia* on the medicine of a hundred years ago. Dr. George Baehr, president of the Academy, will broadcast an address on "A Hundred Years of Medical Progress".

Atomic Research in India

IT is reported (*J. Sci. Ind. Res., India*, 5, 90; Aug. 1946) that the Atomic Research Committee of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, India, has recommended an intensive geological and physico-chemical survey of the thorium-bearing

minerals in Travancore, and set up a sub-committee to draw up proposals for a similar survey of uranium-bearing minerals in India. The Committee considers that atomic research should be given first priority and encouraged by the Government of India on a large scale. However, as it is likely that only small sums will be available for the purpose, it will be necessary to concentrate research at one centre in the country. The centre recommended is the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Bombay, where a 300 MeV. betatron, with a team of ten workers to operate it, is to be established. Grants, to Prof. M. N. Saha for operational expenses of a cyclotron, and to Prof. D. M. Bose for research on the trans-uranic elements, were also recommended by the Committee.

A New Polarizing Light-Filter

DR. BRUCE BILLINGS, of the Polaroid Research Laboratory (Polaroid Corporation, Cambridge 39, Mass.), has recently given to the American Astronomical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science an account of a new type of light filter, making use of the familiar process of building up a filter by the use of crystal plates. Dr. Billings has varied the method by using plates the optical characteristics of which change under the influence of an electric field. This admits of much more rapid and easily controlled changes in the wave-lengths transmitted through the filter than was possible with earlier types. No details are given in the account available as to the narrowness of the band of transmitted light; but it is claimed that it allows for changes in the velocity in the line of sight in prominence streamers so as to give a complete record of the motions of parts of a prominence from a series of pictures taken at different wave-lengths in rapid succession. This promises a marked advance in our knowledge of the three-dimensional structure and whirling motions in prominences, just when they are becoming of increased interest to the student of solar and terrestrial phenomena. Further details will be awaited with interest.

Kew Bulletin

IT will be welcome news to botanical systematists that publication of the *Kew Bulletin* has been resumed after a lapse of nearly five years. The last number to appear was No. 3, 1941, which was issued in March 1942, and publication was thereafter suspended until No. 1, 1946, which has just been issued (London: H.M. Stationery Office, Dec. 1946, 2s. 6d.). It contains a continuation of the additions to the flora of Borneo and other Malay Islands, a part of which was published in 1940, a key to the Carices of Malaysia and Polynesia, notes on some species of the genus *Cryptolepis*, and a description and figure of a new species of *Arisaema* as principal contents.

Spiral Cracks in Glass Tubing

W. P. THISTLETHWAITE, Merchant Venturers' Technical College, Bristol, writes: "A few days after the appearance in *Nature* of October 19 (p. 582) of a letter on this subject, a student brought to me a test-tube exhibiting a perfect spiral crack. The tube was new but notched at the mouth, and was being used to heat a mixture of sand and ammonium chloride. Apparently the crack appeared immediately on contact with a bunsen flame; it originated at the notch in the lip of the tube. That the crack was