

room, and from library to library with cheerful good humour.

Connolly joined the Malacological Society of London in 1908. Five years later, in 1913, he joined the Conchological Society, becoming its president for the session 1929-30; at the time of his death he was a vice-president. He was no narrow-minded specialist; his interests were wide, his knowledge of cookery and wines extensive. He remained in London for most,

if not all, of the war years, and was among the survivors when his hotel was largely destroyed by a flying bomb. That incident affected him more than he cared to admit: soon after the end of hostilities, he began to wind up his affairs in London in order to retire to Bath. This last plan was never realized; he died in South Kensington on February 26, 1947, and is buried in the family vault at Bath.

A. T. HOPWOOD

NEWS and VIEWS

Sir Roy Robinson, O.B.E.

It has been announced that Sir Roy Robinson will shortly relinquish his appointment as director-general of forestry. This will not, of course, mean that he is severing his official connexion with the forest administration of Great Britain, for he will remain chairman of the Forestry Commission, a post he has occupied since 1932. Sir Roy has been a member of the Commission ever since it was set up in 1919 on the recommendation of the Acland Report, in the preparation of which he himself took an important part. The adoption of that report marked a new era in British forestry, constituting the recognition, forced by the experiences of the First World War, that the State must accept responsibility for remedying the very unsatisfactory position in the matter of forests and timber supplies, with an inadequate area of forests and a very low production per acre. For some years he was the only professionally qualified forester on the Commission.

On a recent occasion, the Society of Foresters of Great Britain met to present to Sir Roy its medal in recognition of his distinguished services to forestry, services which incidentally have not been confined to Britain, for he has also taken a very active part in all four Empire Forest Conferences, presiding over the last one, held in 1935 in South Africa. In accepting the medal, he reviewed the work accomplished by the Commission, particularly during the difficult times when it was threatened with complete stoppage, and showed how almost all the arguments used against its activities and plans had later proved wrong. The Commission's 1943 Report on Post-war Forest Policy has been acknowledged in all quarters to be a very able document, though naturally enough all its proposals do not please everyone. It has been accepted by Parliament with only minor amendments as the basis of further work; it will probably come to be known as the Robinson Report, and form a landmark second only to the Acland Report. In the latest published annual report covering the year 1944-45, the total area of plantation is shown as closely approximating half a million acres, apart from another 150,000 acres on private or local authorities' lands in respect of which grants were paid. It is indeed a great achievement for twenty-five years, but only a step on the way, for Sir Roy has set us a new target—two million acres within the next fifty years—and urges that no excuses should be accepted for reducing or postponing it.

Royal Geographical Society Awards

HIS MAJESTY THE KING has approved the award of the Royal Medals of the Royal Geographical Society as follows:

Founder's Medal: Brigadier Martin Hotine,

director of Colonial Surveys, for his original research work in air survey, his contributions to the geodesy of Great Britain and Africa, and for his cartographic work during the Second World War; *Patron's Medal*: Colonel Daniel van der Meulen, for his exploratory journeys in the Hadhramaut in 1931 and 1939, and his contributions to the geography, archaeology and ethnography of Southern Arabia.

The Council of the Society has made the following awards:

Victoria Medal: Prof. E. G. R. Taylor, emeritus professor of geography in the University of London, for her contributions to the advancement of geographical knowledge, including the study of the geographical distribution of population and industry, the promotion of a National Atlas for Britain, and her studies in the development of geographical thought; *Murchison Grant*: Mr. Gordon Manley, for his observations on the meteorology of East Greenland and his research into mountain climates and snow cover in Britain; *Back Grant*: Lieut.-Colonel Andrew Croft, for his journeys in the Arctic, especially as second-in-command of the Oxford University Expedition to Spitsbergen, 1938, and in connexion with Exercise Muskox, 1946; *Cuthbert Peek Grant*, 1946: Mr. John Wright, for his survey work on expeditions to Iceland, Spitsbergen and Ellesmere Island, and in the Sudan during the War; *Cuthbert Peek Grant*, 1947: M. André Guibaut, for his exploration of the Salween gorges, Burma, 1936-37, and of the upper Tung valley on the Chinese-Tibetan borderland, 1940; *Gill Memorial*, 1947: Commander K. St. B. Collins, for bathymetric surveys between Scotland and Iceland and in Denmark Strait under enemy attack.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation: United Kingdom Committee

MR. GEORGE TOMLINSON, Minister of Education, has appointed the following committee to consult with him, in the widest possible terms, on all matters affecting the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation: Mr. Tomlinson (chairman), Sir Ronald Adam, chairman, British Council; Dr. W. P. Alexander, secretary, Association of Education Committees; Prof. P. M. S. Blackett, University of Manchester; Mr. R. S. Brownell, secretary, Ministry of Education, Northern Ireland; Mr. R. A. Butler, M.P.; Mr. R. Gould, general secretary, National Union of Teachers; Mr. D. R. Hardman, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education; Dr. W. A. F. Hepburn (Scotland); Sir John Maud, secretary, Ministry of Education; Dr. H. W. Meikle (Scotland); Sir Philip Morris, vice-chancellor, University of Bristol; Dr. Margaret Read, head of the Colonial Department, Institute of Education, Univers-

ity of London; Sir Ernest Pooley, chairman, Arts Council of Great Britain; Mr. J. B. Priestley; Sir Robert Robinson, president, Royal Society; Mr. B. B. Thomas, secretary of Welsh Department, Ministry of Education; Mr. W. E. F. Ward, Colonial Office, with Mr. F. R. Cowell, assistant secretary, Ministry of Education, as secretary.

Besides this committee, nine national co-operating bodies have already been established to cover the various specialized fields of the activities of the Organisation. Their main functions are to advise the United Kingdom delegates to the conferences of the Organisation and to assist in making known and carrying out projects adopted by it. Six of these are committees covering education, arts, mass communications, libraries, museums, and social sciences. The remaining three are organisations which have undertaken the functions of co-operating bodies; they are the Royal Society, for natural sciences; the British Academy, for letters and philosophy; and the Royal Institute of British Architects, for architecture and planning.

Atomic Survey

THE Atomic Scientists' Association has issued a pamphlet entitled "Atomic Survey", which is a short guide to the scientific and political problems of atomic energy. The authors are Prof. P. B. Moon, secretary of the Association (Physics Dept., The University, Birmingham), and Dr. E. H. S. Burhop, both of whom are well-known nuclear physicists, and have been engaged on the atomic bomb project. In the preface, which is contributed by Prof. R. E. Peierls, it is pointed out that the subject of atomic energy is of great topical interest and importance and that many people, quite rightly, hold strong views on the proper use of this source of power. Strong views should be based on accurate information, and although it requires an expert to understand all the technical details, it is possible to present the essential facts of atomic energy in simple language so that even the non-expert may grasp them. This the pamphlet does admirably. In its thirty-two pages, divided into fourteen brief sections, there is little, if any, information which has not already appeared elsewhere; but this is probably the first time that it has been collected together into a connected and concise form. The section headings—the elements; radioactivity and nuclear reactions; the chain reaction pile; pile problems and prospects; separation of uranium 235 from mixed uranium; the physical effects and defence against the atomic bomb; the constructive application of, and military strategic significance of, atomic energy; the British atomic energy programme; the scientist and atomic energy; the control of atomic energy; and the immediate steps to ease the tension caused by the atomic bomb—are an excellent guide to the matters discussed.

"There is not and is unlikely to be any specific defence against the atomic bomb" makes it abundantly clear, the pamphlet emphasizes, that our first major task is to solve the political problem of ensuring that atomic energy shall not be used for the obliteration of mankind. Then, and only then, can scientific men devote their energy to the intense study of nuclear behaviour; to the extension of our knowledge of a subject, which the authors state with some authority is still incomplete in spite of the spectacular advances of the last decade; and to the development of constructive applications of atomic energy.

Atomic Energy Utilization in Britain

THE Atomic Energy Production headquarters of the Ministry of Supply at Risley, near Warrington, is increasing its team of design and planning engineers, to speed up the development of atomic research in Britain. Already a large technical department at Risley is planning the factories, such as the one being erected at Springfields, Lancashire, which are required for the production of fissile material. This factory, one of the war-time chemical defence plants, is being converted by the Ministry of Supply into an atomic energy centre for the manufacture of uranium metal. The processes to be carried out will consist of the refining of pitchblende concentrates, reduction to metal and the machining and finishing of uranium metal rods for atomic piles. It is hoped that building work and plant erection will be sufficiently advanced for production to begin in the late autumn. When production reaches its peak, a labour force of more than a thousand will be required, of which a number will work on continuous shifts. Most of these will be recruited locally, but it will also be necessary to bring in supervisory staff with specialized knowledge.

Gordon's Astrolabe at the Royal Scottish Museum

THE executors of the late Mrs. Florence Cumming, 18, Ainslie Place, Edinburgh, have handed over to the Royal Scottish Museum an astrolabe which at one time belonged to Robert Gordon of Straloch, the famous Scottish geographer. Robert Gordon of Straloch was born in Aberdeenshire in 1580 and died in 1661. He studied at Aberdeen and Paris, to which latter city he went at the age of eighteen. When he first became interested in cartography is not known, but his later work brought him fame as one of the great map-makers of Scotland. At the request of Charles I, he prepared an atlas of Scotland, which was published at Amsterdam in 1648; and it is recorded that two years later he published in the same city a second atlas of Scotland, called "Theatrum Scotiae", which he dedicated to Oliver Cromwell—possibly the same atlas with revised title to suit the changed circumstances. Gordon is particularly noted for his revision of Timothy Pont's maps of Scotland and Blaeu's Great Atlas of the World, published in Amsterdam in 1654, a wonderful atlas in eleven large folio volumes, of which volume six contains the maps of Scotland.

Gordon's astrolabe is an interesting and most decorative relic, typical of the European version of this ancient eastern instrument. On its edge is inscribed, "Robertus Gordonius"; the instrument was probably acquired by him before proceeding to Paris, or in Paris itself. His pride of possession can well be understood, and it would be natural that the date, 1597, should be inscribed on the newly acquired treasure. The early form of the numerals on the scales, however, would suggest that the instrument was made at least a hundred years earlier than the inscribed date. The astrolabe was the universal instrument and calculator of astronomers, astrologers, travellers, and navigators from the seventh to the eighteenth century. For over a thousand years it maintained a remarkable consistency in design, and the art of its use and construction became known in almost every civilized country. Gordon's astrolabe may be seen in the main hall of the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, where it is being temporarily shown before being incorporated in the Science Gallery collection.