

It is not unduly rash to say that a long way has been traversed towards the realization of the vision that inspired a few enlightened men and women eighteen years ago. Then it faded and all but vanished under the chill blast of the economic blizzard. Now that the vision once more seems on the point of taking shape, it has to face yet another such crisis. If a similar fate is not to befall it, the Government must be urged to appoint forthwith the National Parks Commission and at least the nucleus of the biological service.

G. F. HERBERT SMITH

- ¹ The Report of the National Parks Committee. Cmd. 3851. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1931.)
- ² Report of the Committee on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas. Cmd. 6378. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1942.)
- ³ Memorandum No. 1. (London: Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, 1941; second edition, 1942.)
- ⁴ Nature Conservation in Great Britain, No. 3. (London: Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, 1943; second edition, 1945.)
- ⁵ National Geological Reserves in England and Wales, No. 5. (London: Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, 1945; second edition 1946.)
- ⁶ National Nature Reserves and Conservation Areas in England and Wales. No. 6. (London: Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, 1945.)
- ⁷ Memorandum on Wild Life Conservation and Ecological Research from the National Standpoint; Nature Conservation and Nature Reserves. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1943.)
- ⁸ National Parks in England and Wales. Cmd. 6628. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1945.)
- ⁹ Ministry of Town and Country Planning. Report of the National Parks Committee (England and Wales). Cmd. 7121. Pp. ii+144. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1947.) 4s. 6d. net.
- ¹⁰ Ministry of Town and Country Planning. Conservation of Nature in England and Wales. Report of the Wild-Life Conservation Special Committee (England and Wales). Pp. v+139. Cmd. 7122. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1947.) 4s. net.
- ¹¹ National Parks: a Scottish Survey. Cmd. 6631. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1945.)

OBITUARIES

Prof. E. Laqueur

THE death of Prof. Ernst Laqueur at the age of sixty-eight occurred on August 19, while he was on holiday in Switzerland.

Laqueur's death removes from the field one of the pioneers of modern endocrinology, and particularly that branch of it dealing with the sex hormones. Laqueur had had a very sound training in both chemistry and biological methods, and was himself also a qualified physician. This latter training gave him that great interest in the practical application of scientific work which undoubtedly acted as a stimulus for his investigations into the internal secretions.

His first major contribution to the subject of endocrinology occurred in the very early days of insulin. In the close of the year 1922, Banting and Best had published their classical paper demonstrating the presence of a stable anti-diabetic substance in the pancreas. From that moment biochemists all over the world concentrated on attempts to make possible the production, on an economic basis, of this new substance, insulin. Well in the forefront of this investigation was Prof. Laqueur with his team at Amsterdam. They made a large number of very important communications on both the preparation and the properties of insulin.

It was, however, mainly on the question of the sex hormones that Prof. Laqueur's reputation rests. It will be remembered that in 1924 Allen and Doisy started an entirely new epoch in research on the female sex hormone by applying the vaginal smear method of Stockard and Papanicolaou to the stand-

ardization of the ovarian hormone, as it was then called. Prof. Laqueur immediately started work on similar lines and was certainly in possession of one of the purest specimens of the hormone up to the time of the announcement by Aschheim and Zondek of the presence of the hormone in the urine of pregnancy. Again, this discovery completely changed the whole outlook on the biochemical research into the nature of the hormone; but again Prof. Laqueur was well in the forefront in the crystallization of the hormone from the new source.

In the early 1930's, Butenandt had succeeded in isolating a steroid substance from male urine. This substance, androsterone, proved to have the properties of the male sex hormone in that it was capable of causing growth of the capon's comb. Laqueur was the first to point out that an extract of the testis could be obtained which was more powerful, weight for weight, than the actual crystalline androsterone. At first Laqueur inclined to the view that there was some activator present in the testes and suggested the name of the 'X substance'. Later, however, he characterized the actual hormone and named it 'testosterone'. This research was brought into line with the brilliant discoveries being made at Zurich in the laboratories of Prof. Ruzicka. He had shown that by oxidizing away the side-chain of sterols such as cholesterol, it was possible to obtain the cyclopenteno-phenanthrene nucleus with the right stereochemical configuration, and that this could be used as a basis for the partial synthesis of sex hormones. Testosterone is produced by this method. We have, therefore, in this brilliant research of Prof. Laqueur an excellent example in which skilful and penetrating biological observational work can be combined with organic chemistry, leading to the isolation, characterization and large-scale production of new compounds.

Prof. Laqueur was a frequent visitor to Britain and was well known to all those who worked in this field through his assistance at the various international congresses before the War. With the invasion of Holland by the Germans he was removed from his post, and both he and his family were subjected to the cruelest of treatment. He emerged from the War with severely impaired health, but those who saw him after his ordeal commented on his completely unbroken spirit.

Holland and the science of endocrinology have lost a great pioneer.

E. C. DODDS

Prof. Ll. Rodwell Jones

By the death on August 15 of Ll. Rodwell Jones, shortly before his sixty-sixth birthday, British geography has lost one of its rapidly dwindling group of 'elder statesmen'.

Rodwell Jones was born on August 28, 1881. In due course he proceeded from Kingswood School, Bath, to the University of London, where he took a science degree, and then commenced school-teaching. It was while so engaged that he came under the stimulating influence of Mackinder, then at the London School of Economics, and found his vocation in geography. An appointment as lecturer in geography in the University of Leeds in 1913 was all too soon interrupted by the First World War, in which he served in the West Yorkshire Regiment, reached the rank of major and was decorated with the Military Cross. Shortly after his release from the