

knowledge, and knowledge means power. Like other men, the scientific worker is deeply perturbed and morally concerned about the use or misuse of scientific knowledge. Atomic energy, for example, in itself threatens no one; but the possible use of atomic energy by nations prompted by hatred, envy or fear brings a new apprehension in our lives. The problems raised by this challenge are not for the scientific worker alone, though he has a right to his own views as a man of science; and Sir Edward stoutly supported a scheme of adequate international control at the present stage of the world's moral development, even while looking forward to a world in which such control would be unnecessary.

OBITUARIES

Sir Charles Grant Robertson, C.V.O.

SIR CHARLES GRANT ROBERTSON, who had been principal and, after the amendment of the University Charter in 1927, vice-chancellor of the University of Birmingham from 1920 until 1938, died at his home at Ringwood in Hampshire on February 29. Born in 1869, he passed from Highgate School to Hertford College, Oxford. There he had a brilliant career, being elected a fellow of All Souls in 1893. At Oxford he earned a reputation as a distinguished historian. In 1920 he was appointed principal of the University of Birmingham, to succeed Sir Oliver Lodge, the first principal, who had retired in 1919.

On the outbreak of war in 1914, the main buildings of the University of Birmingham at Edgbaston were immediately taken over by the War Office and converted into the First Southern General Hospital, and what was left of staff and students was scattered to various crowded and inadequate quarters in the city. At the end of the War in 1918, the problem of reconstruction was immense. The buildings had to be cleared and restored to their proper functions and a battle had to be waged with the War Office for the cost of reconversion. Many temporary huts had to be erected to accommodate the flood of undergraduates surging in after demobilization, staffs had to be increased and money had to be raised. The University was heavily in debt and new and costly buildings were essential. An appeal for half a million pounds was therefore launched. The new principal used his remarkable powers of eloquent persuasion, both in public and in private, to great effect, and soon large sums came in from generous Birmingham benefactors, and some of the much-desired ideals became realities. The new Biological Block was built; to the department of chemistry was added the Hills Chemistry Block; and through the munificence of Sir Charles Hyde the Hall of Residence (Chancellor's Hall) and the Students' Union came into being. Sir Charles Grant Robertson used his organising abilities to get a better balance between the faculties by the development of the Arts side and extending the Library. A faculty of law was established, with a chair endowed by Mr. Henry Barber.

Another project dear to the heart of the principal was the building and endowment by Lady Barber, in memory of her husband, of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts. This Institute, which has a beautiful music room in addition to its picture galleries, provides the students with rare opportunities for cultural education outside the routine courses. Behind all

this development was always the energetic personality of Sir Charles.

But perhaps the greatest and most far-reaching of Sir Charles' activities was his advocacy of the Hospitals Centre, with an associated medical school. For thirteen years he laboured unceasingly as chairman of the Hospitals Centre Committee with a generous, energetic and resourceful band of fellow citizens, and finally had the satisfaction of seeing the completion (or, perhaps more exactly, 'the end of the beginning') of their work in the form of the great Queen Elizabeth Hospital, in front of which extends the magnificent building of the Medical School, a visible monument to the solidarity of the University and the City. The persistent energy with which Sir Charles Grant Robertson worked for the advancement of the University of Birmingham in all its branches has left an abiding mark on the great city of whose long line of great 'peaceful invaders' he was not the least.

G. A. SHAKESPEAR

Mr. Griffith Brewer

By the death of Mr. Griffith Brewer on March 1, the fraternity of aeronautical pioneers has lost a well-beloved and much respected friend. Brewer was born in London in 1867 and was by profession a patent agent. For nearly sixty years his chief interest lay in aeronautics, and he was not only an authority on aircraft patents but also a notable balloonist and, later, an aviator who bore the distinction of being the first Englishman to fly in an aeroplane—as a passenger with Wilbur Wright in 1908. Abroad, he was perhaps best known for his work and friendship with Wilbur and Orville Wright and, in particular, for the part he played in the so-called 'Wright-Langley controversy'.

Griffith Brewer was a man of marked integrity and courage; he displayed these virtues to the full when investigating and exposing the claims made in respect of Prof. Langley's 'aerodrome' after its reconstruction and flight in 1914—claims which he regarded as damaging to the credit of the Wright brothers. He was instrumental in 1928 in obtaining the original Wright aeroplane of 1903 for exhibition in the Science Museum, London, as a further step towards securing unqualified recognition of the Wrights' achievement. This recognition is now happily established and shortly to be confirmed by the return of the machine to the United States for preservation in the National Museum at Washington. His vindication of historical truth in that issue is likely itself to pass into history. In 1913, Brewer was entrusted with the formation of the British Wright Company to administer the Wright brothers' patents in England.

Brewer obtained his pilot's licence at Dayton, Ohio; in 1933 he gained a licence for flying autogiros. He served for many years on the Council of the Royal Aeronautical Society, of which he was a past-president; and in 1912 founded the Society's Wilbur Wright Memorial Lecture. His gentle presence and kindly nature will be missed there. M. J. B. DAVY

We regret to announce the following deaths:

Prof. A. S. Eve, C.B.E., F.R.S., emeritus Macdonald professor of physics in McGill University, on March 24, aged eighty-five.

Prof. M. C. Potter, emeritus professor of botany in the University of Durham since 1925, on March 9, aged eighty-nine.