

the finest collection of books on conjuring and allied arts that exists. This library he placed on permanent loan in the University of London, with the intention of bequeathing the entire collection, together with a sum of money for its maintenance, to the University. He had long hoped that a department for psychical research might be established in the University of London or elsewhere, and the negotiations in connexion with this project were long and protracted but never came to fruition. One of the reasons for this was that Mr. Price's interest in psychical research was much more that of a brilliant journalist seeking sensational copy than that of a sober man of science studying obscure phenomena away from the glitter of *klieg* lights and the hubbub of Press conferences.

It was thus that many of his results were greeted with some suspicion, especially as some of the accounts of his own experiences were unverified and in many cases unverifiable. Yet his influence on contemporary psychical research was considerable, and his position in the field he made his own is not likely to be challenged for many years.

WE regret to announce the following deaths :

Sir Franklin Sibly, K.B.E., vice-chancellor of the University of Reading from 1929 until 1946, on April 13, aged sixty-four.

The Rev. Thomas Stephenson, a well-known amateur field botanist, on April 15, aged eighty-two.

## NEWS and VIEWS

### Félix Vicq d'Azyr (1748-94)

FÉLIX VICQ D'AZYR, who was born at Valognes in Normandy two hundred years ago on April 23, 1748, may properly be styled the greatest comparative anatomist of the eighteenth century before Cuvier. At the wish of his father, a doctor, he went to Paris at the age of seventeen to study medicine, remaining in the capital all his life. His social success and rapid rise to fame he is said to have owed to the French naturalist, Louis Jean Martin Daubenton, whose niece he married. He became permanent secretary to the newly founded Paris Academy of Medicine and succeeded Buffon in the French Academy. He was also consulting physician to the Queen. While his name is specifically immortalized in the 'band of Vicq d'Azyr' (also described by Gennari in 1782) and in the 'bundle of Vicq d'Azyr' (fasciculus mammillo-thalamicus), he made numerous exceedingly distinguished contributions to comparative and to human anatomy. Of particular importance is his comparative study of the limbs of man and animals, which stresses the correspondence between the flexor and extensor muscles of the legs and arms. In the troubled times in which his last years were spent he frequently risked death by attending patients on the proscribed list. He is believed to have caught a chill while watching the burning of the allegorical figure of atheism, and he died on June 20, 1794, at the early age of forty-six. Vicq d'Azyr's writings were published after his death by Moreau de la Sarthe under the title "Oeuvres de Vicq d'Azyr" (6 volumes), Paris, 1805.

### Fuel Efficiency Committees

WHEN he opened the Wolverhampton Industrial Centenary Exhibition, Mr. Hugh Gaitskell, Minister of Fuel and Power, announced that he had reconstituted the Fuel Efficiency Committee organisation of the Ministry. This organisation consists of a central Fuel Efficiency Committee and a Fuel Efficiency Committee in each Region. The Fuel Efficiency Committee was first set up in September 1941, under the chairmanship of Dr. E. S. Grumell, who will continue as chairman. As now reconstituted, it will have the following terms of reference: "To advise on the application of measures promoting economy and efficiency in the use and consumption of fuel and power; to survey the progress of the organisations established for this purpose; to report the problems

arising from these surveys which appear to require scientific investigation; to advise generally as to the lines on which a policy designed to raise the standards of utilization of fuel and power can best be implemented".

Many members of the previous committees have consented to serve on the new body. Other experts in different branches of fuel technology, and additional representatives of both domestic and industrial consumers have been invited to join. Liaison with both sides of industry will be ensured by the nomination of members of employers' and trade union organisations, and also with the Industrial and Domestic Coal Consumers' Councils, through their chairmen. The Regional Fuel Efficiency Committees are being reconstituted on similar lines, and their chairmen will be *ex officio* members of the main Committee. The committees consist entirely of voluntary unpaid workers.

### Grants for Scientific Research in Belgium

THE annual report for 1946 of the Institute for the Encouragement of Scientific Research in Industry and Agriculture, Exercice, Brussels, details the twenty-nine projects for which subsidies were granted in 1946. The largest of these, 2,800,000 francs, was to the Electrical Construction Works of Charleroi, for research on electronic tubes and their applications; a grant of 2,458,000 francs was made to the Foundation for Potato Research for investigations on the breeding of varieties resistant to virus disease, and one of 2,000,000 francs to the Belgian Institute for High Pressures for static and dynamic researches in the field of high pressures, the development of methods for determining the quality of powders and explosives and the study of the metrology of high pressures. A further grant of 1,900,000 francs was made to the Electrical Construction Works of Charleroi for the continuation and extension of research on the mercury vapour arc, while the Belgian Institute for the Improvement of the Beetroot received 1,890,000 francs for continuing agronomic, chemical, biological and mechanical investigations on the improvement of the sugar-beet. To the Union of Belgian Artificial Textile Manufacturers, "Fabelta", 992,000 francs were granted for investigations on the determination of the properties of viscose filaments, and on the deformation of threads of regenerated cellulose. A grant of 891,000 francs was made to the National Research Centre for the Study