

The Geological Society of London elected him a foreign member, and the Royal Geographical Society an honorary member. Germany, France and Belgium paid him tribute.

The Stanford campus is no longer graced by his striking figure and courteous manner, but his example

remains of how old age may best be spent, in exercise, study and cultivation of the affection of one's fellows. He closed his full life, as he closed his speech accepting the Penrose Medal, "with a cheer to Youth that carries on in the search of Truth".

HOWEL WILLIAMS

## NEWS and VIEWS

Wool Industries Research Association: Mr. B. H. Wilsdon

THE resignation of Mr. B. H. Wilsdon offers the opportunity to place on record some of the work accomplished during his fourteen years directorship of the Wool Industries Research Association. His experience before going to Torrington included research at Oxford, varied activities as professor of chemistry at Lahore, and five years as superintendent of laboratories at the Building Research Station of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. He found the vitality at Torrington at a low ebb; but under his stewardship the output of research increased steadily in volume and quality, and the chief successes of the teams he gathered together and encouraged are impressive. Torrington became the birthplace of partition chromatography. Described by Sir Robert Robinson as the greatest advance in protein chemistry since the work of Fischer, it spread rapidly to many important laboratories faced with complex mixtures of organic and inorganic substances. By its aid and by other methods, significant contributions were made to our knowledge of the chemical constitution of wool. In the more technical field, the dry chlorination process for producing non-felting wool was ready at the outbreak of war in 1939, together with the 'Warnorm' certification mark, to help ensure the unshrinkability of the socks and underwear supplied to the Forces. Another war-time activity, carried forward with great energy, was the impregnation of fabrics with active charcoal, originally as an anti-gas measure, but later used extensively to absorb bad odour from anaerobically dressed wounds. Noteworthy advances were also made in the application of physics: a clearer insight into the physical factors underlying the comfort of wool clothing was gained, and studies on machinery and operational research pointed the way to post-war economies in woollen carding and worsted drawing. In addition, statistics was brought to bear on testing methods and on wool metrology. All this work was widely appreciated in Australia and in the United States, but less so in Great Britain. This is a common occurrence in the life of a growing institution; even the active workers do not appreciate the full value of their collective efforts. Later recorders will, it can be safely assumed, point to Mr. Wilsdon's directorship as a very bright period in the scientific history of Torrington.

### Social Implications of Scientific Progress

AN important event of the year for the world of science is the three-day Convocation at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass., which opened on March 31. The general theme of the Convocation is "The Social Implications of Scientific Progress at the Mid-Century Point", and two opening speeches were delivered by Mr. Winston Churchill and Mr. Harry S. Truman. Addresses given by eminent men from many walks of life and from

various parts of the world fall under the following six main divisions: "The Problem of World Production"; "The Problem of the Underdeveloped Area"; "Science, Materialism and the Human Spirit"; "The Role of the Individual in a World of Institutions"; "Specialization in Twentieth Century Education"; "The State, Industry and the University". Among the British speakers are Sir Henry Tizard, chairman of the Defence Research Policy Committee of the Ministry of Defence; Lord Hailey; and Sir Richard Livingstone, president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Speakers from other countries include Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, president of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and Prime Minister of Mysore State; M. Pierre Ryckmans, Belgian representative on the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations; Mr. Carlos Contreras, president of the National Planning Association of Mexico; and Mr. Oswaldo Aranha, formerly Brazilian Ambassador to the United States. At the end of the Convocation, the ceremony of inauguration of Dr. James Rhyne Killian, jun., as president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, takes place, and one of the addresses of welcome to Dr. Killian is by Mr. David A. Shepard, honorary secretary in London of the Institute, and chairman of the Anglo-American Oil Co.

### Manchester Joint Research Council: Report for 1948

THE Manchester Joint Research Council, established in 1945, has for the first time issued a printed annual report. This report, covering the year 1948, pays tribute to the work of Mr. A. H. S. Hinchcliffe, as chairman, and Sir John Stopford, as treasurer, during the first, formative years, and they have now been succeeded by Sir E. Raymond Streat and Sir Charles G. Renold, respectively. One of the most successful ventures of the year was the meeting in February, addressed by Dr. A. King, which was a result of the efforts by the Council to supply information to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research on the need for sponsored research activities in the north-west of England. The resulting discussion further indicated that for many years to come the Council is likely to be closely concerned with improving the technology of the small firm and with encouraging accelerated development and inventiveness in industry generally. In an effort to ascertain how the Council might apply itself to discovering the hindrances which prevent firms from using knowledge already available, Sir Henry Tizard was invited to the October meeting of the Council. Sir Henry's remarks reinforced the opinion that an objective and scientific investigation of the needs of industry in this area would be a substantial contribution; and at the annual meeting on February 28, the joint honorary secretary, Mr. J. Ainsley, indicated the broad pattern of the inquiry which the Council proposed to pursue. The intention was for a team of experienced men to