

study of electrochemical problems. He had also recently collaborated in the first reliable determination of the dielectric constant of anhydrous sulphuric acid, proving this important quantity to be not much higher than that of water. Only the first-fruits of all this later work have yet been published.

Though of a quiet disposition, James was a good and witty lecturer, very popular with his students, and well liked by his colleagues. He was unmarried. His untimely death in a mountaineering accident in the Jotunheim, Norway, on July 9 is a great loss to electrochemistry in Britain. J. C. SPEARMAN

NEWS and VIEWS

Parliamentary and Scientific Committee: Deputation to the Lord President of the Council

A DEPUTATION from the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee, including Lord Samuel (president), Lord Waverley (past-president), Sir Ralph Glyn (deputy-chairman) and Mr. M. Philips Price (vice-president), which waited on Lord Woolton, the Lord President of the Council, on July 28, while welcoming the indications in the speeches of Lord Woolton and Lord Cherwell in the debate in the House of Lords on June 11 that the Government recognizes the urgent importance of exploiting discovery and research as rapidly as possible and of a much closer liaison between science and industry, asked for further information as to the specific action the Government proposed to take in the immediate future, especially in so far as such action would make a valuable contribution to productivity and the balance of payments crisis. Further information was also requested as to the action the Government proposes to take to meet the very serious criticism of the last report of the Advisory Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, especially in regard to the recruitment of staff and the execution of the Department's Building Programme. In this connexion the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee urged that it was false economy to hold up essential developments in the country's scientific and technical resources. Research must be based on reasonably firm budgetary expectations for several years ahead, and sudden and unexpected limitations or cuts caused more than a proportionate retrenchment. The deputation also urged the extension of the co-operative research scheme to research in veterinary medicine and agriculture and asked for further information as to the steps to be taken to build up a technological institution of university rank and to increase the financial assistance available for selected technical colleges.

The deputation also indicated the Committee's strong endorsement of the main conclusions in regard to scientific man-power of the last report of the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy, and also represented to Lord Woolton that the facilities for the publication of original papers and abstracts in the field of chemical sciences also called for inquiry and action by the Government. Some replies received in reply to a question as to the extent to which industry made effective use of the results of scientific research and any obstacles to the utilization thereof, included in a questionnaire circulated by the Committee prior to the House of Lords debate, suggested that the absence in Britain of an efficient abstracting journal or journals was a major obstacle and that there was a case for further support from the Government for scientific publication generally. Defective liaison services, the lack of trained men both on boards of directors as well as in production, difficulties experienced in obtaining licences and delivery of items of plant, financial problems arising out of

plant obsolescence and taxation policy were also contributory factors, as well as the general backwardness of some industries. Lord Woolton expressed his keen interest in the points raised and promised to give them careful consideration.

Wool Industry Research Levy

AN Order increasing the wool industry research levy was approved by the House of Commons on July 24. The amount of the levy depends on both the employment in the industry and its consumption of raw material. Both have declined, and the increase has been requested by both sides of the industry, by the Wool Textile Delegation and by the National Association of Unions in the Textile Trade, and it was estimated by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade that the amended rate would have yielded £70,000 in place of the £48,000 actually collected during the first six months of this year or the £114,000 produced by the first year of the levy approved in October 1950. Of the £48,000 collected this year, £31,000 was based on the employment unit and £17,000 on the supply and consumption of fibre. The Parliamentary Secretary expressed himself as satisfied with the programme of research conducted by the Research Association and stated that the £100,000 required to qualify for the grant from the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research was regarded as adequate for the programme in mind. Some concern as to the value of that programme was expressed in the debate, notably by Mr. Mikardo, who urged that the most forward-looking and imaginative research was being done not in the Research Association establishments but in industry. He questioned whether the research association was devoting sufficient attention to what he called the fundamental problems of the industry, and asked whether the distribution of expenditure on research between the research association, the universities and the technical colleges was that most appropriate to enable the industry to make the best use of scientific knowledge. Mr. Mikardo was as concerned as other speakers in the debate that there should be adequate expenditure on research and the fullest possible utilization of its results by the industry. The distribution of research effort is not a matter for the Board of Trade, however, and Mr. Mikardo scarcely made his case sufficiently specific to warrant the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research setting up a further survey panel from what he said alone.

United Nations Resolution on Indigent Aliens and Refugees

ON August 9, 1951, at its thirteenth session, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations adopted a resolution directing attention to the report on assistance to indigent aliens prepared by the Secretary-General at the Council's request and re-affirming its recommendation that governments