

saving over the country as a whole of several million tons of coal a year. Better still, for the same total fuel consumption there could be greater industrial productivity and improved conditions of comfort. With further intensification of fundamental and applied research, ways and means could be found for obtaining even greater fuel and power efficiency at an economic cost justified by the potential savings". No plan for the development of fuel and power which ignores this aspect can be regarded as realistic, and support for the programme outlined by the Minister for Fuel and Power must wait on evidence that it represents the minimum demands which can reasonably be made on Britain's resources of coal, manpower, capital and other raw materials.

GOVERNMENT AND SCIENCE

Government and Science

Their Dynamic Relation in American Democracy. By Don K. Price. (James Stokes Lectureship on Politics. New York University-Stokes Foundation.) Pp. ix+203. (New York: New York University Press, 1954.) 3.75 dollars.

IN the first four chapters of this book Mr. Price traces the development of science in the United States and the way in which the form taken by its organization was shaped, inevitably, by the pattern of American institutions and democratic ideas. In them he epitomizes also much to be found in those earlier reports, "Research, a National Resource", in Dr. Vannevar Bush's "Science, the Endless Frontier", and the Steelman Report, "Science and Public Policy", and he gives the gist of the debate which ultimately issued in the establishment of the National Science Foundation. His shrewd comments and penetrating analysis of the real issues contribute to a clear understanding of the difficulties which the latter Foundation has hitherto encountered. They will also help those outside the United States to appreciate more fully what lies behind the security problem in that country, and the way in which it has affected scientists. Although Mr. Price writes with his eyes on the American scene and reader and his comments on the British practice and organization are sometimes uncertain and not always entirely accurate, these chapters will be read with interest by all who to-day are concerned with the problem of securing the adequate endowment of scientific research without external control, or with the other main problem of the relations between Government and science, namely, that of determining how best the findings of science can be integrated into public policy where required.

It is, however, the chapters on the "Machinery of Advice" and the "Structure of Policy" that give the book its widest appeal. As an exposition of the issues involved in the place and use of the expert in government, be that expert administrator or scientist, they can scarcely be bettered. Mr. Price goes right to the heart of the problem, and the principles he lays bare are as valid and relevant in Great Britain and elsewhere as in the United States. What he has to say on the vulnerability of science to political attack, or on the consequences that follow when scientists best able to exercise discriminating judgment on matters of secrecy and security are by temperament and

tradition so impatient that they leave this business too much to people who know too little about it, applies on both sides of the Atlantic. The clash between scientific freedom on one hand and security considerations on the other, as he points out, may really be due not to a fundamental conflict, but simply to political irresponsibility or sheer incompetence. Mr. Price reveals the complexities of the situation and the dangers which promptly follow failure to recognize where the boundaries of knowledge end and the realm of responsible judgment begins. Nor does he suggest that we are likely to find an easy solution. The lines of advance that he indicates can be as usefully pursued in the context of conditions in Great Britain as in the United States. Though the particular solution found will vary, certainly in detail, and quite possibly considerably in structure, it will doubtless be found that in both countries success will depend more and more on our administrators and perhaps some of our political leaders beginning their careers as scientists, or at least with some training in science.

The book can be whole-heartedly commended to all who are concerned with the problems which the advancement of science involves for society, and the way in which public policy could be based on knowledge as far as is possible. Even for its last chapter alone it is worth reading, and the pity is that so outstanding a book should have been produced without either index or bibliography. R. BRIGHTMAN

THE CAMBRIDGE PLATONISTS

The Platonic Renaissance in England

By Prof. Ernst Cassirer. Translated by James P. Pettegrove. Pp. vii+207. (Edinburgh and London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1953.) 15s. net.

THE British genius for understatement is well illustrated in this very able translation of the late Prof. Ernst Cassirer's book, originally published in German in 1932. For not only has it been left to a distinguished Continental scholar (an expert in Neo-Kantianism) to portray the Cambridge Platonists as they should be portrayed, but even among professionals in Britain they have been put on one side. There are reasons for this neglect, which will appear in the sequel; meanwhile, a little more enterprise over—say—the past two centuries would have given weight to these scholars' limitations, while extracting the essence of their thought. Nevertheless, in the pages before us, there is now a good 'yield'. But the remarkable thing is how relevant to our present intellectual position these essays are: they could scarcely be more appropriate if they had been contributed *ad hoc* instead of as a commentary upon a group of seventeenth-century thinkers, themselves not always lucid in analysis, and deplorably prolix in expression. Yet, they had a 'message' for mankind.

To see what this was, it is necessary to appreciate the philosophical climate in which these Cambridge men, Henry More, Ralph Cudworth, Benjamin Whichcote and John Smith, laboured. It was the age of empiricism and of Puritanism. At first sight, these somewhat chilling winds would appear to blow in opposite directions (and so perhaps to cancel out); but on closer reflexion they are seen largely to reinforce one another, and thus to produce a mighty blast against which these Platonists struggled man-