

News and Views

Sir William Beveridge, K.C.B.

THE presence in Oxford of Sir William Beveridge, who will return there as master of University College next October, will greatly strengthen the young but vigorous Oxford school of philosophy, politics and economics. No head of a House there, with the exception of Mr. H. A. L. Fisher of New College, has had so brilliant a combination of an academic and public career. At Balliol, where Sir William was an undergraduate, he distinguished himself in mathematics, classics, philosophy and law. Later, he became a fellow of University College. In London he has had a wide experience as administrator, first in the Civil Service and, since the War, as director of the London School of Economics and Political Science. For many years he was at the Board of Trade and the Ministries of Munitions and Food, and there became a great and resourceful authority on problems of labour, unemployment and industrial insurance. To him more than to any other is due the organization in Great Britain of 'Labour Exchanges'. He has latterly been chairman or member of several important commissions or tribunals dealing with industrial wages and insurance. For the last eighteen years he has been a senator of the University of London and was vice-chancellor in 1926-28. He is still comparatively young. His resource and energy, and his wide knowledge of men and affairs, can now be devoted to Oxford for many years.

Social and Economic Problems for Solution

THE group of 150 distinguished public men and women of all schools of democratic public opinion who eighteen months ago published an essay in political agreement in a book called "The Next Five Years" have now submitted a narrower "Programme of Priorities" to cover a period of five years—that is, the lifetime of a Parliament ("A Programme of Priorities". Pp. 12. (Oxford: "Next Five Years Group", 1937.) 3*d.*). The programme is a practical plan applicable to the political and economic situation of England to-day and is submitted for discussion by all those who see the importance of a common effort to serve the nation and strengthen its influence in the world at this critical time. A number of its proposals, such as an extended housing programme by widening the definition of overcrowding, the extension of the milk-in-schools scheme to all elementary schools, or the raising of the school leaving age to fifteen years without exemptions, merely require the tightening of legislation.

OTHER proposals which are put forward in the pamphlet give concrete expression to present tendencies in the Government or to authoritative recommendations in Commissions and reports already submitted to it. They include the provision of

national parks and playing fields, recreational and cultural amenities in connexion with slum clearance and new housing estates, agricultural marketing Acts administered by appointed bodies entrusted with the duty of considering the interests of the community as a whole, the expansion of the national health insurance panel system into a public medical service, the pensioning and removal from the live register of elderly persons who have been unemployed for five years, the location of industries, measures to restore and maintain the personal qualities of the unemployed in the Special Areas, public development schemes, the co-ordination of transport, the freeing of trade by the overhaul of the tariff system, etc., the expediting of the new Factory Act, control over undesirable speculative methods of finance, further State aid for social and economic research and the encouragement of the shorter working week and annual holidays with pay. Under international relations the programme includes a proposal to all European countries to set up a fact-finding commission to examine outstanding problems such as Colonial questions, access to raw materials, the lowering of trade barriers and positive economic co-operation, currency co-ordination, racial minorities and claims to changes in territorial *status quo*, as well as renewed efforts to establish a system of collective security, the limitation, reduction and supervision of armaments and the rebuilding of the League of Nations as the main and consistent object of British policy.

The Social Credit System

UNDER the title "Poverty and Over-Taxation; the way out", the Marquis of Tavistock has published a further account of the Social Credit system (Coventry: Prosperity Office, 1937. 6*d.*). Among seven reasons given for the failure of the present financial system, he stresses the way in which science and machinery are destroying the need for human labour, but are increasing the output of real wealth in goods. Because the machine does the work of several hundreds of people, it becomes more and more difficult every year to find work for everyone, and no cure for poverty can be found by attempting to give everyone a paid job in industry. The effect of machinery and fresh scientific inventions is to destroy the demand for human labour, and although new industries are started, fewer and fewer people are needed. Apart accordingly from the necessity of education for leisure, it is urged that the State should direct the banking system to create and issue, *not* in the form of debt, as much money as is required to enable the citizens of the country to buy at a price fair to sellers all that they desire of what industry and commerce can produce or import. Of the three main items in the reform necessary to make money