

NEWS AND VIEWS

Dr. T. A. Henry

THE Wellcome Foundation recently made a presentation to Dr. T. A. Henry to mark the completion of his twenty-first year of service as director of the Wellcome Chemical Research Laboratories. Dr. Henry began his research career as a Redwood scholar in the Research Laboratories of the Pharmaceutical Society, whence he moved to the Scientific and Technical Department of the Imperial Institute, where he held a Salter's Company research fellowship and ultimately became superintendent of laboratories. He was appointed to his present post in 1919. Dr. Henry has done much original work on natural products, particularly cyanogenetic glucosides and alkaloidal drugs, while in his applications of chemistry to progress in medicine he has covered a very wide range of subjects.

During his directorship of the Wellcome Chemical Research Laboratories, Dr. Henry has given considerable attention to the chemotherapy of tropical diseases, including hookworm, leprosy, kala azar and malaria. This has involved investigations on the chemistry of organo-metallic compounds of arsenic, antimony and mercury, and has led, among other things, to a thorough examination of apoquinine, apoquinidine, niquidine and niquine and to the elucidation of their chemical constitution. Recently, the laboratories under his direction have been exploring the relationship of chemical structure and bactericidal action in the new group of drugs starting from sulphanilamide. In 1927, Dr. Henry was awarded the Hanbury Medal, which is given periodically by a committee including the presidents of the Chemical, Linnean and Pharmaceutical Societies for "high excellence in the prosecution or promotion of original research in chemistry and natural history of drugs". He is the author of the well-known text-book on the "Plant Alkaloids", of which a third edition was issued last year.

Scientific Research and Taxation

AT a time when the financial position of learning and scientific research is a matter of serious concern, no little interest is attached to the decision of a Divisional Court when Mr. Justice Hawke, Mr. Justice Charles and Mr. Justice Tucker on April 25 dismissed an appeal by the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London (*The Times*, April 26). The appeal was from the decision of the County of London Quarter Sessions that the School was not exempted under Section 1 of the Scientific Societies Act, 1843, from the payment of rates in respect of certain premises occupied by it. The provisions of this Act, by which a "society instituted for the purposes of science, literature, or the fine arts exclusively" may be exempted from the payment of rates, but of which full advantage had not been taken for some time, were successfully

invoked by a number of learned and scientific societies in the financial stringency which followed on the War of 1914-18. It was a further manifestation of the favourable attitude of the authorities towards learning and research at this time, when not only was exemption from income tax allowed or continued to scientific societies which in addition to serving the interests of their members could be shown to be carrying out work of public utility, but also an additional concession made income tax recoverable on subscriptions guaranteed over a period of years.

It may seem that there has been a change in the spirit which prompted this last concession in Sir John Simon's statement last week that he is not prepared to propose an alteration of the law, which at present makes no provision for exempting benefits for research from estate duty. At the present time this decision is not surprising; but it is a matter which scientific bodies and organizations interested in research should not allow to go by default when a more favourable occasion arises. The trend of the application of financial legislation in the last hundred years has been to free the pursuit of learning from the burden of taxation so far as possible. In the days of financial stringency which the future will bring, estate duty will inevitably prove a heavy burden on posthumous endowment of research, unless a change is made.

Family Allowances

THE question of family allowances is discussed by a recent broadsheet issued by Political and Economic Planning (P.E.P.), and in a new pamphlet by Miss E. F. Rathbone, "The Case for the Immediate Introduction of a System of Family Allowances and Alternative Proposals for such a System", issued by the Family Endowment Society, 72 Horseferry Road, London, S.W.1. The broadsheet points out that family allowances have become a live issue to-day for three main reasons: the need to restrict civilian consumption while safeguarding basic standards of health and nutrition; the claim for 'equal pay for equal work' which may arise sharply in the munitions industry if large-scale replacement of male by female labour occurs; and the need, intensified by new types of war-time distress and the multiplication of assistance scales, for codification of the numerous regulations. To relate income to the extent of family responsibilities is the only way of preventing the general reduction of consumption, however effected, pressing unfairly on large numbers of children. Wages are not only a payment for work done but also the means for rearing and maintaining a family, and all agencies by which consuming power is diverted from the social pool for the benefit of dependent wives or children are, in fact, agencies for family endowment. Miss Rathbone contends that

family allowances offer the best means of meeting unavoidable increases in living costs simultaneously for workers in all occupations with similar family needs, without stimulating a race between prices and wages.

Both Miss Rathbone's review and the broadsheet discuss systems and experience in other countries, and favour a national service, State-regulated and State-administered. Tabular statements included in Miss Rathbone's pamphlet show that the charge on the Exchequer ranges from £118 million for a State-paid scheme, covering all children under fifteen years of age in Britain at 5s. per child, to £6½ million for the State share of a contributory insurance scheme, covering only the population insured for unemployment at 3s., beginning with the second child. Miss Rathbone prefers a bold imaginative scheme, covering the entire child population at the rate of 5s. a child, on the grounds of justice, for eugenic reasons and because of the greater simplicity of administration. If this is considered too costly, a contributory insurance scheme is urged involving an Exchequer contribution of £6½-£32½ million. Whatever the scheme, payment of the allowance to the mother is strongly recommended, partly to diminish the attraction of the labour market to married women and partly to emphasize that the allowance is not part of the remuneration of labour, but a recognition of the child's value to the community.

An International Air Force

A PLAN for the organization of an International Air Force is outlined in the report of the Military Research Committee of the New Commonwealth Institute, which was printed just before the outbreak of the War but has only now been issued. The scope of the proposed Force is as a reinforcement of the self-defence of States, adequate to give each the sense of security from attack that its unaided strength, alliances, or guarantees of neutrality are unable to ensure. The scheme could only operate if a sufficient number of States consented to co-operate, and the report points out that absolute neutrality is inconsistent with co-operation against war by any plan. Associated States would make an annual contribution to a common pool, in equal proportion to their total resources or war budgets. The assistance afforded to each assured State would be the maximum possible and not determined by the amount of its contribution. After discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the alternative systems of a Force composed of national quotas and an independent organic Force recruited by voluntary enlistment, the report strongly recommends the latter. It is essential, that the Force should be as efficient, as homogeneous, and as certain to act when required as is humanly possible.

In regard to language, the Committee recommends the adoption of Spanish, and it is suggested that each contributing State should provide a base with extra-territorial status in its territory for the Force, this distribution of bases giving a wide area of protection, while the Force should have the maximum

possible freedom of movement both in peace and in war. In regard to the supply of aircraft, the Committee contemplates drawing on the manufacturing resources of private firms in all States sufficiently prominent in aviation, and manufacture would be directed and supervised by a design department, a research department and an inspection department serving the Force. The contributing States would be represented on the Board of Control, although the Force would have complete internal autonomy and the power of executive initiative. In addition to an intelligence service, the High Command would be provided with simple standing orders to ensure rapid action after determination of the facts. The scheme is regarded as well within the ability of European and adjacent States to finance, organize, equip and recruit.

Regional Organization and Local Government

IN a paper entitled "Regional Organization during and after the War" read before the Royal Society of Arts on February 7, Brigadier Sir Edward Tandy described the regional organization developed for defence purposes and discussed its adjustment to meet peace-time requirements after the War. Reviewing our existing peace-time machinery for local government, which he urged must be accepted but reinforced by regional organization to meet emergencies like that of war, Sir Edward Tandy suggested that the easiest way to establish the regional organization required for peace would be to accept the system established for war and retain a suitable nucleus of staff at each regional headquarters. These headquarters would be available almost at once to form advisory committees to consider how new measures of reconstruction could be best applied to each region, or the best distribution within each region of any funds which might be allotted by the central Government for particular purposes. They could also assist as liaison officers in smoothing difficulties between the central Government and local government authorities and the like, and Sir Edward suggested that the commissioners should be designated Commissioners of Public Welfare, to indicate the wide general scope of their activities. Such regional organization could easily be discarded if it proved to be superfluous, but Sir Edward indicated the difficulties which are at present continually arising in the absence of a regional system for peace-time purposes.

The Zoo during War-time

THE report of the Zoological Society of London presented at the annual meeting on April 29 shows that after the first great drop in public visitors last September to 11.3 per cent of the figures for the corresponding period of the previous year, there has been a healthy recovery. The Society is to continue its publications at about half the normal scale; 180 animals have been 'adopted' under the Society's war-time scheme to cover feeding costs and there have been developed photographic competitions to encourage amateur photography at the Zoo, and