

NEWS AND VIEWS

Islamic Culture in London

THE announcement by Mr. G. N. Hall, Under-Secretary of State in the Colonial Office, in the House of Commons on November 13 that the Government at an early opportunity would invite Parliament to vote a sum not exceeding £100,000 for the purchase of a site for the erection of a mosque and centre of Islamic culture is one which has caused intense gratification to Moslems in Great Britain, and will be deeply appreciated throughout the Moslem world. The need has long been felt for an adequate centre of this kind at which Moslems in Great Britain might offer their prayers, develop Islamic culture and preserve their religious tradition. His Excellency Hassan Nashaat, Egyptian Ambassador in London, in announcing the gift by broadcast in Arabic "to my brothers in Islam" as reported in *The Observer* of November 17, appealed to the Moslem world for a sum of £500,000 towards the building fund, having previously given an assurance that this great centre of Islamic culture would belong to the whole Moslem world and would be controlled by its representatives irrespective of sect or denomination. The gift from the British Government, as was suggested in a reply by Mr. Hall to a supplementary question, in a sense is reciprocal to a gift from the Egyptian Government some years ago, when the site for a cathedral was presented to the British community in Egypt.

Conditions in Air Raid Shelters

THE committee appointed jointly by the Minister of Health and the Minister of Home Security in September last, under the chairmanship of Lord Horder, made its first recommendations within a few days of its appointment and has continued to give advice from time to time. Further recommendations, with brief statements by the Ministry concerned of action already taken, have now been issued (London: H.M. Stationery Office. 2d. net). The Committee states that the crux of the problem is overcrowding, which should be countered by popularizing the domestic and communal shelters, and also by vigorously pursuing evacuation schemes already in operation. The other recommendations refer mainly to the provision of amenities, such as bunks, lighting and sanitary arrangements, and of first aid posts. On the thorny question of heating, the Committee points out that it is closely related to ventilation. The ideal solution would be air-conditioning, but as this is not practicable, ventilation by natural means is assumed. All ventilation shafts and other means for the entrance and exit of air should obviously be kept free, and floor draughts should be controlled by arranging for incoming air to be admitted at high levels so that it may mix with warm air. Shelters liable to crowding do not require heating even in winter, but sparsely occupied shelters might be heated during the latter part of the day-time. Air-borne infections may be reduced by spraying with a solution of sodium hypochlorite, and inoculation

against diphtheria should be encouraged. A simple form of face mask would help to prevent the spread of droplet infection by coughing and sneezing.

Psychology in War-time

IT is reported by Science Service that at a recent meeting of the South Psychiatric Association held at Jacksonville, Florida, Dr. C. Charles Burlingame, of Hartford, Conn., discussed the Nazi utilization of applied psychology in warfare. Dr. Burlingame pointed out that Hitler is mentally abnormal, but because he is a hysteric, it must not be assumed that his thinking is not lucid; for he has successfully used the psychological factors of modern warfare to produce mass depressions and mass anxieties in whole nations. In dealing with him, the statesmen of the world have made the grave and tragic error of assuming that he was a normal man, whereas almost any psychiatrist would have known that he could not be expected to function or react in a normal way. Psychology can, however, make a positive contribution to the task of ridding the world of Nazism. In times of war, all the paranoid trends come to the surface; in other words, the primitive brain which supplies the drive and co-ordinates the activities, but lacks the ability to formulate abstract principles, is apt to take charge. This is shown by outbreaks of persecutions and terrorism; such outbreaks are a sign of weakness. Germany will grow progressively weaker as her hatred grows stronger and then suddenly transforms itself into despair and depression. It is the duty of psychiatrists to ward off such outbreaks. They can also watch for possible social gains in times of war; many youths whom medical men would classify as 'unstable' might find a new life in the Army, where under intelligent discipline, with security and regular direction, they may become useful citizens.

Production of Feeding-Stuffs in Great Britain

SUPPLEMENTING his study of Britain's supplies of feeding-stuffs from all sources (see *NATURE*, Sept. 14, p. 362), Dr. Norman Wright has investigated quantitatively the problem of making good war-time deficiencies by using new sources of indigenous materials and by improved conservation of all supplies (*Agric. Prog.*, 17, Pt. 2). He finds that conservation of all slaughter-house offals would only just offset the greatly diminished supplies of fish-meal, and that large-scale utilization of kitchen waste would provide a mere fraction of our requirements. Of greater significance is the officially projected production of one million tons of grass silage, but this amount would involve the construction of about 30,000 silos, each of 30-35 tons capacity; and if ten per cent of the straw not used for stock-feeding were converted into a digestible cellulosic feed by predigestion with alkali, more than 20,000 digestion tanks and about 22,000 tons of caustic soda would be required.

Neither the direct use of urea or ammonium bicar-