

NEWS AND VIEWS

H. E. Armstrong Lecture

ALTHOUGH H. E. Armstrong did not take an active part in the formation of the Society of Chemical Industry, he was nevertheless one of the original members, and the Society has founded a Lecture in his memory. The task of delivering the first of what will no doubt be a series of distinguished lectures, was a difficult one, and the Society could not have selected a better man than the son of 'H. E. A.' Dr. E. F. Armstrong and his father had many interests in common; they followed the same profession, they took holidays together, and, Dr. Armstrong says, he was "closest to him over nearly sixty years", being in almost daily contact with him by letter even when separated geographically. Now Dr. Armstrong has given an intimate account of his father's life and work in the form of the first Armstrong Lecture, which was delivered on February 3. The complete Lecture has been published in *Chemistry and Industry* (Feb. 8). Some of the ground covered, particularly that relating to chemical work, was dealt with by "W. P. W." in the obituary notice which appeared in *NATURE* of July 24, 1937. The last part of Dr. Armstrong's lecture, however, reflected more of the personal and human aspects of the 'H. E. A.' known to the present generation of men of science, and it seemed appropriate that this portion, supplementing in some ways the obituary notice, should appear in *NATURE* (see p. 373), where many of Armstrong's stimulating and often provocative contributions were published.

Scientific Co-operation between Great Britain and the United States

ON March 20, the president and council of the Royal Society entertained fellows of the Society and a number of friends at a buffet luncheon at Burlington House to meet Dr. J. B. Conant, the president of Harvard University. Sir Henry Dale and Dr. Conant received the guests, who numbered more than a hundred and fifty, among whom were Sir John Anderson, Lord Hankey, the High Commissioners for Australia, Canada and South Africa, and five of Dr. Conant's colleagues in his mission, namely Dr. K. T. Bainbridge, Dr. F. L. Hovde, Dr. E. J. Poitras, Dr. Warren Weaver and Dr. Carroll L. Wilson. At the conclusion of the luncheon, in the Society's meeting room, Dr. Conant gave a brief talk. He expressed his great pleasure at meeting such a representative body of British men of science, and hoped that his visit to this country would further the co-operation between scientific workers on both sides of the Atlantic, particularly in the direction of an interchange of ideas and experiences bearing on problems arising out of the War.

Emergency Scientific Research Bureau in Eire

THE Government of Eire has set up a small advisory body, to be known as the Emergency Scientific Research Bureau, to deal primarily with

the technical problems involved in the provision of substitute processes and materials during the period of the emergency. This body, which will be attached to the Department of the Taoiseach, has the following terms of reference: (1) To give technical advice to the Government on such special problems relating to industrial processes and the use of substitute materials as may be referred to them. (2) To advise the Government generally on the use of native or other materials to meet deficiencies caused by the restriction of imported raw materials and commodities. (3) To direct or conduct special researches and inquiries connected with the above.

The following have been appointed to be members of the Bureau: Prof. J. J. Dowling (chairman), professor of technical physics, University College, Dublin; Dr. J. J. Drumm; Prof. M. A. Hogan, professor of mechanical engineering, University College, Dublin; Prof. J. H. J. Poole, professor of geophysics and experimental physics, Trinity College, Dublin; Dr. T. S. Wheeler, State chemist. The secretary to the Industrial Research Council, Dr. J. J. Lennon, will act as secretary to the Bureau. The Bureau will utilize the premises of the Industrial Research Council, 45 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin.

University College, Cardiff: Air Raid Damage

UNIVERSITY College, Cardiff, has suffered to some extent in recent air raids, the most extensive damage being at the Students' Union building. The refectory of the Union, which was erected with money collected by students as a memorial to those students who lost their lives in the War of 1914-18, has been wrecked, and will probably have to be rebuilt, while the rest of the Union premises have also been badly shaken. Fortunately the new gymnasium, recently completed at a cost of £17,000, escaped almost untouched. The Cathays Park buildings of the College suffered from blast, many windows and almost all the roof lights being destroyed. The Tatem Laboratories were the most affected, and blast caused a considerable amount of damage internally to fittings and apparatus in both the Physics and the Chemistry Departments, though not enough to put these Departments out of commission for more than a few days. A fire was started in the Drapers' Library but was quickly extinguished by the fire watchers. Fire watchers at the Union luckily escaped serious injury, but one of the watchers in the College buildings has unhappily died of injuries received in the course of his duties. A young assistant on the staff of one of the visiting institutions which are at present working in University College, Cardiff, was also killed at his lodgings in the town. These casualties have caused deep regret.

Cost of Living for Working-Class Families

A FURTHER publication in the New Merseyside Series issued by the Statistics Division of the Social Science Department, University of Liverpool, deals

with the cost of living of representative working-class families (Liverpool: University Press. London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd. 1s.). A household consisting of father, mother and young children has been selected as representative, as well as a widow supporting two children of school age, and a husband and wife, both old-age pensioners. Essential needs are sub-divided under the usual five heads: food, clothing, rent and rates, fuel and light, sundries. In regard to food, the findings of the report of the British Medical Association Committee on Nutrition have been taken as one basis, but the specimen diets were modified to satisfy rationing regulations and to permit greater variety in diet and elasticity in cooking. The poverty standard selected is that adopted for the Merseyside Survey. The report indicates that between June 1933 and October 1940, expenditures showed increases of 57.5 per cent, 64 per cent and 76 per cent respectively for the family, widow with children, and old-age pensioners.

Comparing the estimated basic needs of these representative families, poverty standards, actual expenditure, and income from the social services, the inquiry indicates that the services concerned succeed in finding a close approximation to the cost of bare subsistence, though this is appreciably below the human needs standard. The blot on the social services is the absence of adequate provision of assistance for sick persons and their families, and the reduction in benefit when work is lost on account of illness. The report includes an analysis of actual expenditure of three typical non-earning families as well as of the average expenditure of 8,905 families, and a comparison with human needs, which suggests that the British Medical Association diets are what they were intended to be, estimates of the *minimum* expenditure on food necessary for health and working capacity. The sums spent on rent, fuel and light in the average budget are also rather higher than those allotted on the human needs standard, but the difference between the two results under the head of clothing is insignificant. The total average household expenditure revealed in the budgets collected by the Ministry of Labour is 50 per cent higher than the estimated cost of living at the human needs level.

Hindu Iconography

A VALUABLE collection of paintings and bronzes of international repute illustrating Indian art and religion has recently been added to the national collections by donation to the Department of Oriental Antiquities of the British Museum (Bloomsbury). It has been given by Mrs. E. C. Moor and was formed by her husband's grandfather, Major Edward Moor, F.R.S. (1771-1848), while gathering material for his pioneer work "The Hindu Pantheon" (1810). The collection consists of 609 objects, of which 360 are bronzes and 249 are paintings and drawings. The paintings, which with the bronzes were for the most part acquired through a pandit of Poona, to whom Moor refers and who identified the subjects, are Decani

in style. Some belong to an eighteenth century Rajput school, while the most important illustrate verses by the poet Kesava Das of Bundelkund (1555-1617) and were probably executed at Jaipur in the early eighteenth century. The majority of the bronzes are of seventeenth century or eighteenth century date. The value of the collection lies in its original purpose as illustrating Hindu iconography; and as is pointed out in an account of the collection (*Brit. Mus. Quarterly*, 14, 4; 1940), since not all of them were used in "The Hindu Pantheon" and those that were engraved for publication were "made more handsome", there is room for much fresh work on the collection. It is hoped that it will provide the nucleus of a study collection for students of Indian art and religion.

Birds of North-West England

A LIST of 270 species and five subspecies together with much original information on bird habits and movements resulting from some twenty years field-study of bird life in the area between the Ribble and the Dee and inland to Warrington were given on February 13 in a paper to the Liverpool University Biological Society by Mr. Eric Hardy, an honorary member, who reviewed the results as they had been drawn up for the Merseyside Naturalists' Association's proposed handbook on the birds of the area. Much of this work might seem idle in war-time, but the bird census and survey have disclosed items of economic importance such as the distribution and habits of useful and harmful birds on the land, which are being sent to the Royal Lancashire Agricultural Society. The increase in the distribution of wild duck, waders, gulls, crows, owls, etc., and the decrease of other birds is of more than natural history interest.

The bird census showed an average density of 6.7 birds to the acre; the house-sparrow, which forms 38 per cent of the bird population of a Liverpool suburban park, forms only 2 per cent of the population of rural Knowsley Park. Mr. Hardy pointed out that a knowledge of the economic position of bird life in an area is essential to war-time agricultural efforts in order to know what to protect and what to repress—an undertaking too often treated from a national rather than a local attitude. It has often been stated that we could not live more than nine years without birds owing to the ravages of insect pests they control; but modern field work has shown that a greater toll of insect pests like caterpillars is taken by predatory insects.

Spike Disease of Sandal

THE spike disease of sandal was first noticed forty years ago and since then numerous investigators have studied the problem. For the most recent account of the disease the reader is referred to an article by Rao Sahib S. R. Iyengar and A. L. Griffith (*Indian Forest Records*, 6, No. 4). Work so far carried out has led to the conclusion that it is an insect-borne disease. The vector is of such a size that it can pass through a mesh of $\frac{1}{4}$ in. but is excluded by