

## NEWS and VIEWS

## Prof. R. A. Daly : Wollaston Medallist

THE Wollaston Medal of the Geological Society of London is awarded to honour those who have made "researches concerning the mineral structure of the earth". The very appropriate choice of Prof. R. A. Daly to be this year's recipient of the Medal will be endorsed with enthusiasm by his many friends and admirers. A Canadian by birth and a graduate of the University of Toronto, Daly began his long association with Harvard in 1892, first as a graduate student and afterwards as an instructor in geology. In 1901 he resigned this post to take up a Canadian appointment as geologist on the International Boundary Commission. Ten years of work resulted in a map of, and report on, a 400-mile belt along the 49th parallel from the Pacific, across the Western Cordillera, to the Great Plains. The two following seasons were devoted to the C.P.R. section through the mountains. These arduous years gave him the experience that led to the writing in 1913 of his most famous book, "Igneous Rocks and their Origin", which, rewritten twenty years later as "Igneous Rocks and the Depths of the Earth", remains as an outstanding contribution to petrology. On the resignation of W. M. Davis from the Sturgis Hopper research professorship at Harvard in 1912, Daly was selected as his successor.

This attractive appointment, which enables its incumbent to teach as little and to study and travel as much as he pleases, gave Daly the freedom to carry out a large number of fruitful investigations, many of them based on field studies in distant lands, including South Africa, many of the classic areas of Europe, and a number of oceanic islands. Among his results, presented in a most stimulating series of papers and books, are new theories of granite formation and emplacement, of the origin of alkali rocks, of the mechanisms of volcanic action and mountain building, of the origin of coral reefs and, most recently, of the origin of submarine valleys (see p. 156). Daly has an enviable flair for correlating and attempting to explain the facts of observation—indeed, it is now an old Harvard tradition that "Every morning in the year, Daly has a new idea!"—and it is therefore not surprising that in recent years he has made himself a master of the modern geophysical methods of attacking the fundamental problems of the earth's structure and thermodynamic history. He has, moreover, done much to initiate and guide the long stream of co-operative geophysical research which Harvard has sponsored. Eloquent and influential teacher and writer, and a prolific and successful worker in a variety of challenging fields, he has deserved well of his fellow-geologists and has abundantly earned the honour now conferred upon him by the Geological Society.

## Parliamentary and Science Committee

THE significance of the contribution being made by science to the war effort was the keynote of the addresses delivered at the first annual luncheon arranged by the Parliamentary and Science Committee (president, the Earl of Dudley), and held on February 3. This body, it will be recalled, was constituted in 1939 to take over the functions of the Parliamentary Science Committee. It consists of

members of both Houses of Parliament, and some twenty-seven organizations concerned with scientific activity are affiliated to it. Its purpose is to provide a permanent liaison between scientific bodies and Parliament.

Lord Hankey, Minister without Portfolio, reminded his audience that from his work with the Scientific Advisory Committee, the Engineering Advisory Committee and the Technical Personnel Committee, he is in constant touch with scientific and technical men, and he paid a warm tribute to the eagerness with which they have responded to the call for their services. He then described in general terms some of the steps which have been taken to utilize scientific effort.

The Scientific and Engineering Advisory Committees work in close association, and often through the medium of *ad hoc* conferences formed from appropriate members of the two Committees and with the aid of independent scientific workers. Co-operation with the United States and with the Dominions has been arranged, and there is a constant exchange of individual men of science and of scientific information. So far as Great Britain itself is concerned, Lord Hankey said that all three Fighting Services are "science-conscious"; scientific men are being used, even in the operational side, both individually and in teams, while the universities and technical colleges are providing intensive scientific training for the great numbers of men and women required to operate scientific war apparatus. The reliance on science during the War is, in Lord Hankey's opinion, going to have a big influence on statesmen and officials in the days to come, and he concluded: "I hope and believe that the association of science with government in our hour of need to-day will continue after the War."

Sir Henry Tizard, rector of the Imperial College of Science and Technology, who is now working with the Department of Research and Development, Ministry of Aircraft Production, began by referring to the sense of frustration under which many experienced scientific men are suffering; the present Government and Parliament, however, attach more value to the help and guidance of scientific workers than have any previous Parliament. Science, like war, he pointed out, has its strategy and its tactics. The tactical strength of science in Great Britain is very great; there are well-equipped experimental establishments and, thanks to the innate abilities of our race and to progressive educational policy, a large number of young workers giving high service to the State. The strategical position of science, however, is not so good. In pure science, the fundamental strategy is to attack at the weakest point of the barrier to knowledge; in applied science, the attack must be made where the best results are obtainable. The choice of problem is of crucial importance, and for decisive results effort must be concentrated on it to the exclusion of other matters. The strategy of science in the war effort can only be determined by ever closer collaboration of the man of science with the executive staffs of the fighting and other services. Sir Henry concluded with a striking comparison. The two great driving forces of Western civilization are science and Christianity. The principles and ideals of science, no less than those of Christianity, must sustain and guide all political action which fights for liberty and social progress.