

NEWS and VIEWS

Importation of Books into Britain

LORD BALFOUR OF INCHRYE, speaking in the House of Lords on February 19, directed attention to the effects of the present restrictions on the import of books into Britain. He said that we cannot afford to fall behind in the application of modern scientific developments, and due to the difficulty in publishing books there is danger that Britain will be cut off from the exchange of ideas and knowledge. He suggested the imposition of a maximum time-limit for dealing with applications for import licences, that the permissible quantities of book imports be increased, and that there should be blanket licences of specified amounts for universities, libraries and approved scientific bodies. Lord Chorley, Lord in Waiting, in reply, said that the President of the Board of Trade is discussing with representatives of the learned institutions their difficulties in obtaining books, particularly from the United States. As a result of those discussions, an increase in the quota may be granted, though he would not hold out a promise that it would be up to the 200 per cent of the pre-war amount which had been suggested.

Conscription and Industry

AN article by D. R. O. Thomas (*J. Inst. Personnel Management*, 29, No. 293; September-October 1947) directs attention to the possible effect on industrial efficiency of the withdrawal of large numbers of young men for national service requirements. Under the Act, which becomes operative on January 1, 1949, men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six years are to be called up for national service for a period of twelve months, the actual call-up age being eighteen, and thereafter each man will serve 5½ years with the reserve, during which he is required to do sixty days training. This, and the new developments under the 1944 Education Act in respect of the raising of the school age to sixteen years and the establishment of county colleges, will mean that industrial organisations will be faced with the prospect of starting youths in employment at sixteen years and afterwards releasing them for one day in five up to eighteen years, when they will disappear altogether for twelve months. On return to employment, the young man will be required to do two weeks Service training per year for 5½ years, which, together with his annual holiday, may mean his being absent from industrial employment for one month in every twelve until he is about twenty-five years of age.

Remembering, too, that the effects of the lower birth-rate will be strongly felt within the next decade, these national service requirements are bound to cause difficult problems for management in industry. It is essential, therefore, as Mr. Thomas points out, that the national service period should be used as efficiently as possible and should fit carefully into a scheme of training and experience, from school-leaving age to twenty-one or so, which will provide a useful apprenticeship to the responsibilities of work and citizenship. To offset the loss of industrial time, industry itself must make the best possible use of the time available in providing young people with specific training for their jobs. The rest of the article makes cogent suggestions for training schemes for various types of recruits and indicates how the difficulties of deferment for apprentices and students can be overcome.

U.N.E.S.C.O. : New Appointments

THE following new appointments in U.N.E.S.C.O. have recently been announced:

Dr. Clarence E. Beeby, director of education in the New Zealand Government, to be assistant director-general, concerned chiefly with the co-ordination of educational activities. Dr. Beeby, head of the New Zealand Delegation to the Second Session of the General Conference in Mexico City (November-December, 1947), was also chairman of the Programme and Budget Commission and thus is already well familiar with the aims and the activities of the Organisation.

Prof. Emile Auger, member of the French Atomic Energy Commission, to be head of the Natural Sciences Section. Prof. Auger was a member of the French Delegation to the General Conference of U.N.E.S.C.O. and has for the past year been a member of the Executive Board of the Organisation. He will replace Dr. Joseph Needham in that post. Dr. Needham, after nearly two years service with U.N.E.S.C.O., is returning to his post at the University of Cambridge.

Prof. Pedro Bosch Gimpera, to be director of the philosophy and humanistic studies section. Prof. Gimpera was formerly Dean of the Philosophy Department of the University of Barcelona. He has lately been professor in the University of Mexico.

Mr. Gordon Menzies (Australia), to be director of administrative services.

War-time Work of the American Academies

"THE ETHNOGEOGRAPHIC BOARD", by Wendell C. Bennett (*Smithsonian Misc. Coll.*, 107, No. 1; 1947), is a history by one of its members of an organisation for harnessing the academic institutions of the United States to the war machine. It was set up by the National Research Council, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Social Science Research Council and the Smithsonian Institution in June 1942 and continued until the end of 1945. It was not an official body and it was financed and supported by the organisations which founded it, particularly the Smithsonian; but it was very largely used by the Armed Forces and Government departments, and is described as a "clearinghouse for Government needs and Academic knowledge". It consisted of a directorate, situated in the Smithsonian, which was the Washington office of the Board and did most of the work, and the Board proper, which was advisory. It produced reports on various areas, and lists of people with knowledge of foreign parts, and it undertook special projects, of which a booklet called "Survival on Land and Sea" was one of the most valuable and was widely circulated to the Armed Forces in the Pacific theatre. It had no equivalent in Great Britain, where the type of information supplied was collected by Service departments, such as the naval and military intelligence organisations and the Inter-Services Topographical Department.

Dr. Bennett gives a straight account of the Board and its activities, pointing out its strength and its weaknesses, and makes suggestions as to how such a body should be organised if needed again. (One of these is that it might have a better name!) Some points are of general interest, particularly the first paragraph on war-time Washington, beginning "For the millions who milled around Washington in the first half of 1942, no statement about the fabulous confusion could ever be adequate . . .", and the following statement about the search for people who