to the extent of blocking the recognition of the most crucial problems of all.

One triumph of the Commission was the final acceptance of the view that what is understood by the term 'mental health' is part of a system of values; it is, in other words, a culturally determined and approved end. It required a tremendous effort to pluck out this view from the mass of anxieties, tensions and resistances which obscured it.

If the Commission made no striking new discoveries, at least it brought to light the fact that multi-disciplined thinking involves more than the mere coming together of diversely educated persons in order to exchange views. Multi-disciplined thinking may operate at many levels. In its most rudimentary form it is simply 'additive', combining the points of view of different disciplines. At a more advanced stage, it requires a new type of concept, which reflects the many-faceted situations of real life. This is one aim of operational research which is essentially a multi-disciplined activity.

The major outcome of the Congress was the formation of a World Federation for Mental Health. This Federation has already been accepted by the World Health Organisation and Unesco as a consultative body on all matters pertaining to mental health in the widest sense. The new organisation will have its roots in the professional groups formed in so many countries to prepare the way for the Congress. These groups will be strongly encouraged to broaden the base of their activities to include all the social sciences as well as psychiatry, and machinery will be devised to link all these groups with the new World Federation. In the way it is hoped to mobilize all the efforts of social scientists, in research and practice, towards the study of the most urgent human problems agitating the contemporary world.

JOHN COHEN

OBITUARIES

Dr. P. R. Lowe, O.B.E.

PERCY ROYCROFT LOWE, who died on August 18, was born at Stamford, Lincolnshire, on January 3, 1870. He was educated privately and went to Jesus College, Cambridge, where he graduated as a B.A., and afterwards qualified in medicine and surgery at Guy's Hospital, London. He served as house physician and surgeon at two hospitals in the Midlands. In 1899 he volunteered for service in South Africa and was appointed medical officer in charge of Princess Christian's hospital train. It was while he was in South Africa that he became interested in ornithology and began to make a collection. On the termination of hostilities he returned to Great Britain and a short time afterwards was appointed private physician to Sir Frederic Johnston. This was a most fortunate appointment for an ornithologist, as Sir Frederic Johnston spent the winters abroad in his private yacht and during the next six years Lowe visited the West Indies and a number of islands in the Atlantic. On these voyages he took every opportunity to study birds and brought together a collection of some three thousand skins which he later presented to the national collection. Lowe contributed a series of papers on his collections, including a study of the genus *Coereba*, in which he paid special attention to the variations in colour in that genus.

In the First World War, Lowe served in Lord Dunraven's yacht fitted up as a hospital ship, and afterwards as a captain in the R.A.M.C. in command of Princess Christian's ambulance train. In 1919 he succeeded Mr. Ogilvie-Grant in charge of the bird collection in the British Museum, and retired in 1935.

Lowe was specially interested in the anatomy and osteology of birds, and was an exceptionally careful and painstaking worker. He made a close study of the Charadriiformes, or wading birds, and published several papers on their classification based on osteological characters and colour pattern. He wrote extensively on the ostriches—both recent and fossil. His studies of the primitive characters of penguins aroused a good deal of criticism, but all will admit that his work on the microscopical structure, arrangement and moult of the feathers of these birds was of outstanding importance. For long there had been much discussion as to whether there were two species of the steamer duck (*Tachyeres*) but it was left to Lowe to prove, in 1934, that there was a volatile and non-volatile species.

Archæologists are indebted to Lowe for proving that the supposed remains of the pheasants from Roman sites in Great Britain are nothing more than the bones of domestic fowls.

It is no exaggeration to say that in the last fifty years Lowe has done more than anyone to advance the study of the anatomy of birds and their classification.

Although Lowe had always been interested in the preservation of birds, it was not until 1925 that he began to take an active part in the cause. In that year he received a letter from the late Prof. Lönnberg directing attention to the grave decline in the numbers of wildfowl in Sweden and asking his advice and assistance. He took up the matter with characteristic energy and started extensive inquiries in Britain and elsewhere. His conclusions, which were published in pamphlet form, went to show that the decline in numbers was mainly due to increased commercialization, and that unless something was done the numbers of wildfowl were bound to go on decreasing. Through his efforts the British Government was persuaded to hold an International Wildfowl Conference in 1927. A year or two earlier the International Committee for Bird Preservation had been founded, and Lowe became secretary of the British Section and for many years was chairman. His efforts in the cause of bird preservation were greatly appreciated on the Continent, and in 1938 he was elected chairman of the European Section. He was president of the British Ornithologists' Union during 1938–43 and in 1946 was awarded the Salvin-Godman Medal for his outstanding work on the anatomy of birds and his efforts in the cause of protection.

In 1924 he married Harriette Dorothy, widow of Charles Parker of Fairlee and younger daughter of the late E. G. B. Meade-Waldo. He is survived by his widow and one daughter.

N. B. KINNEAR

Dr. C. A. Elsberg

CHARLES ELSBERG, who died at his home in Stamford, Connecticut, on March 18, was one of the most distinguished neurological surgeons of his generation. When he started his career, neurological surgery did not exist as a specialty. While brain surgery was being developed by Harvey Cushing, the surgery of the spinal cord, in which Elsberg was to win international renown, was in its infancy.

The son of a merchant, Elsberg was born on August 24, 1871, in New York City—the scene of his life's work. Educated at the College of the City of New York, he graduated B.A. in 1890, and three years later took the M.D. at the College of Physicians and Surgeons ('P. and S.') of Columbia University. After serving as interne at the Mount Sinai and Sloane Hospitals, he worked under von Mikulicz-Radecki in Breslau, and on his return was appointed adjunct surgeon at the Mount Sinai. When in 1909 the Neurological Institute opened its doors at 149 East 67th Street, he was offered the post of chief of surgery, which he held until 1937. In 1929 the Institute moved to its present home (168th Street and Fort Washington Avenue) in the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center. Its history was told by Elsberg in 1944, in his fascinating and colourful "The Story of a Hospital", which contains a wealth of biographical and autobiographical material. He was editor of the *Bulletin of the Neurological Institute*, begun in 1931, the fifth volume of which was dedicated to him on his sixty-fifth birthday.

In 1917, at the request of the Surgeon-General, Elsberg organised the New York Neurosurgical School for Medical Officers of the American Army, of which he became military director.

His more important writings include "Experimental Investigation of the Treatment of Wounds of the Heart by Means of Suture of the Heart Muscle" (1898), which was translated into many languages, and the classic "Surgical Diseases of the Spinal Cord, Membranes, and Nerve Roots" (1941), which was a revised edition of "Diseases of the Spinal Cord" (1916) and of "Tumors of the Spinal Cord" (1925).

Many honours came Elsberg's way: he was president of the American Neurological Association and of the Society of Neurological Surgeons, and his name is associated with the operation of drainage in syringomyelitis (also known as Pussep's operation). An inspiring teacher—he was very popular as professor of neurological surgery at 'P. and S.' (1921–37)—he was distinguished and youthful in appearance, charming in manner, deeply cultured, and he radiated energy and enthusiasm.

W. R. Bett

Mr. J. S. Dow

Mr. John Stewart Dow died on August 12. He was born in 1881. After passing through a course in electrical engineering at the City and Guilds of London Engineering College he was for some years on the staff of the College and was later engaged on research work, chiefly on photometric problems.

His early association with Leon Gaster led to the first publication in 1908 of *The Illuminating Engineer*, on which he acted as assistant editor. Since 1928 he had been editor, the name of the journal having been changed to *Light and Lighting* in 1936.

Mr. Dow was even better known for his unbroken connexion with the Illuminating Engineering Society since its foundation in 1909 when he was honorary assistant secretary. In 1928 he became honorary secretary, a position he held until he became president in 1946. After his term of office as president, he continued to serve on the Council of the Society, and during the whole thirty-nine years he was present at every Council meeting. He was a fellow of the Society, and in 1942 was elected an honorary life member, an honour which was shared only by the late Mr. A. P. Trotter.

He was a member of the Departmental Committee on Factory Lighting and of the Illumination Research Committee, as well as of the Lighting Committee of the Building Research Board and numerous other committees concerned with lighting.

He was honorary secretary of the Association of Public Lighting Engineers from 1931 until the end of 1935.

His life's work for the Illuminating Engineering Society cannot be over-valued. He always avoided publicity; but it is due to his work and foresight that the Society has reached its present position. He will be deeply mourned by all associated with lighting matters.

NEWS and VIEWS

New British Association President: Sir John Russell, O.B.E., F.R.S.

At the British Association meeting just held at Brighton under the presidency of Sir Henry Tizard, Sir John Russell was elected president for the 1949 meeting at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Sir John has a world-wide reputation as an agricultural scientist. He joined the staff of the Rothamsted Experimental Station in 1907, and succeeded the late Sir Daniel Hall as director in 1912. He retired in 1943, the year of Rothamsted's centenary. During his thirty-one years as director, there was a remarkable expansion of Rothamsted's activities. Various new departments were added, new buildings were erected, and the finest agricultural library in Great Britain, if not in the world, was built up. He also raised the necessary funds for the purchase of the Rothamsted Farm and the Manor House. Sir John has made outstanding contributions to soil science and is the author of several standard works on that subject. He is a former president of the International Society of Soil Science, a foreign associate of the Paris Academy of Sciences, and a member of numerous other academies. Among the distinctions he has received are the Messel Medal of the Society of Chemical Industry and the Albert Medal of the Royal Society of Arts. During the Second World War he was adviser to the Soviet Relations Division of the Ministry of Information and chairman of the Agriculture Sub-Committee of U.N.R.R.A.

Sir John is the first agricultural scientist to become president of the British Association. He has regularly attended the meetings for more than forty years and was the first recorder of agriculture when that subject was a sub-section of botany. Agriculture was made an independent Section in 1912 and Sir John was president of it in 1916 at Newcastle, in 1924 at Toronto and, again, at the centenary meeting in London in 1931. He has served several periods as a member of Council and has been chairman of various committees and a president of the Conference of Delegates of Corresponding Societies. Sir John has travelled widely and has made a special study of agriculture in the U.S.S.R. and Poland. He is about to visit Poland again to take part in the jubilee celebrations of the Academy