has been issued, I will go through it and let you know what subjects I should like you to deal with if you are able to do so" (see also ref. 16).

Yet the editorial content of the journal was Sir Richard's ultimate responsibility throughout the interwar period. What criticisms did Gregory have to offer of British society ? In light of such dissatisfaction how did he propose to alter the nation's political and economic structure ? Finally, did his position change over time, and, if so, was its modification a response to specific political developments ?

The Unscientific Society

To Gregory and his associates the most disturbing feature of British society was the degree to which passion, prejudice and unreason dominated political life. Professor Hyman Levy[17], in an attack upon Sidney Webb's speech to the Science and Labour Conference of 1924, asked

> Can it be contended in all seriousness that the present conditions under which electoral decisions are registered are even an approximation to the type of democracy Mr Webb has in mind . . . ? Is it necessary to point out that, with a press for which liberty is license and prejudiced issues are truth, it is impossible at a general election to attain the requisite calm for the exercise of a considered judgment by a democracy ill-equipped to rise above the passionate clamour of parties ?

The *Nature* coterie was particularly unhappy about the organization of politics along party lines. The parties were most often pilloried for their tendency to buttress tradition against the assaults of those who advocated reasoned change. Thus an intimate of Brightman's, E. F. Armstrong, confessed in a leader that "it is difficult for people engaged in scientific pursuits to understand why membership of a political party . . . makes the individual . . . work for a traditional policy, without reference to its merits or demerits . . . "[18]. Once the reform-minded scientists saw themselves as estranged from the accepted channels of political life, they began to doubt the wisdom of liberal democracy itself. Throughout the interwar period *Nature* continued to ponder darkly "whether the machinery of democratic government is such as to adapt itself to the scientific approach to the solution of the problems of government and administration . . . "[19].

Given the journal's attitude toward politics in general, its hostility toward specific parties requires little documentation. What is somewhat surprising is the extent to which the Labour Party was singled out for special criticism. While it is true that Gregory had considerable sympathy for the labour movement's economic aspirations[20], he vehemently disapproved of both its occasional militancy and its resistance to the mystique of industrial efficiency. Four months before the Science and Labour Conference which he had helped to organize, Sir Richard characterized a Labour Party manifesto as "a paraphrase of Ruskin's assertion that 'The advance of science cannot otherwise be recorded than by the invention of instruments to kill and pull down noble life'—a view in which distorted vision is combined with the sin of ingratitude"[21]. A succession of Labour governments fared no better. They were censured for either their failure to appoint scientists to Royal Commissions[22,23] or their restrictions on expenditure for scientific research[24]. On the other hand, *Nature* gave a clear vote of confidence to the Baldwin government of 1935 for its handling of economic affairs[25]. Gregory also supported Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement. In October of 1938 he hailed the Munich agreement over Czechoslovakia as "the beginning of a new era in the history of the world, . . . a significant stage in the progressive ethical evolution of the human race"[26].

If the political parties were judged inadequate in terms of their scientific outlook, so too were most administrative departments of government. *Nature*'s strongest complaint was that the civil service system favoured the advancement of Oxbridge arts graduates over their scientific brethren. The result was "much dissatisfaction among scientific and technical officers, both in Great Britain and overseas"[27]. In the domestic service the issue of discrimination was not resolved during the interwar period. The reports of the Royal Commission on the Civil Service (1929) offered no satisfaction[28]. For added measure the commissioners in 1936 dropped the section of the service's entrance examination which dealt with " 'Everyday' Science" without consulting "scientific authorities before arriving at the decision"[29]. *Nature*'s position on the imperial service was more complicated, because the leaders on this subject were written by Major A. G. Church, a close friend of Gregory and an MP deeply involved in imperial affairs. In the mid-twenties Church detected hopeful signs of scientific enlightenment in both the report of the East African Commission[30], of which he was a member, and the formation of the Research Sub-Committee of the Imperial Conference of 1926[31]. His enthusiasm was evidently premature. Subsequent leaders

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Hexuronic Acid as the Antiscorbutic Factor

EXPERIMENTS are being carried out in order to decide whether ' hexuronic acid ' is the antiscorbutic factor. So far as is known, the distribution of this acid in plants follows closely the distribution of vitamin C. In the animal body it can also be found in relatively high concentration in the suprarenal cortex. Its chemical properties closely agree with the known properties of the vitamin. It was discovered and isolated several years ago at the Biochemical Laboratory, Cambridge.[1]

The hexuronic acid used in the present series was prepared in crystalline form from beef suprarenal glands two years ago at the Chemical Department of the Mayo Clinic.[2] As is known, 1·5 c.c. of lemon juice is the minimum protective dose for guinea-pigs against scurvy. This quantity of lemon juice contains approximately 0·5 mgm. of hexuronic acid. 1 mgm. of the acid has been given to our test animals daily, since, owing to the long exposure to air, some of our hexuronic acid preparation may have been decomposed.

The test period in the first experiment consisted of 56 days. At the end of that time the guinea-pigs which had been receiving hexuronic acid, as well as the positive controls which received 1 c.c. of lemon juice, were chloroformed. The positive controls showed mild scurvy on autopsy, while the animals receiving hexuronic acid showed no symptoms of scurvy at all.

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