

NEWS and VIEWS

H.R.H. The Duke of Kent, K.G., P.C., K.T.

It is with deep regret that we record the death of H.R.H. The Duke of Kent on active service in a flying-boat crash in Scotland on August 25. The Duke was thirty-nine years of age. For ten years, as Prince George, he served in the Royal Navy, and it was not until he was withdrawn from active service with the Navy that his talents and capabilities for public service could be thoroughly appreciated. As president of St. George's Hospital, he took a great personal interest in its welfare and prosperity. At the age of twenty-six he joined the Foreign Office and later moved to the Home Office, where he did important work in the inspection of factories and in other problems of sociological interest. His keenness for this work inspired him to sever his official connexion with the Home Office and to study industrial problems at first hand. His prolonged tour of the industrial north in 1931, followed by a series of less formal visits to factories and workshops, will long be remembered.

Sir Harold Scott, K.C.M.G.

SIR HAROLD SCOTT, who retires from the post of director of the Bureau of Hygiene and Tropical Diseases on August 31, has made notable additions to our knowledge of tropical medicine and comparative pathology. In Jamaica, when Government bacteriologist, he elucidated the problem of the so-called 'vomiting sickness', proving it to be due to poisoning by the ackee fruit (*Blighia sapida*), a common native food on the island, wholesome when ripe and naturally opened, but highly toxic in its unripe, unopened condition. He also investigated another baffling disease in Jamaica, showing it to be a 'central' and not a 'peripheral' neuritis as previously thought, but of toxic origin closely allied to certain avitaminoses occurring in Africa and elsewhere. As Government bacteriologist in Hong Kong he added much to the knowledge of tuberculosis by his investigation of its prevalence and character among Chinese of the poorer classes. Later, when pathologist to the Zoological Society of London, he was able to compare his three hundred postmortem studies of fatal human cases in Hong Kong with similar studies on wild animals dying of tuberculosis in the Zoological Gardens. His results, published by the Medical Research Council in 1929, throw much light on the pathology of the disease, the portals of entry, and on the lymphatic systems in relation to paths of infection within the body.

As medical secretary of the Colonial Medical Research Committee during 1928-30, and as assistant director and then director of the Bureau of Hygiene and Tropical Diseases, Sir Harold has greatly promoted and encouraged research in the Colonies. His "History of Tropical Medicine", published in 1939 and based on his Fitzpatrick Lectures delivered before the Royal College of Physicians, is a monument of learning and exposition.

Science and the War Effort

PROF. J. D. BERNAL, speaking on "Science and the War Effort" at a meeting called by the Staff Associations of the National Physical Laboratory and associated laboratories on July 28, referred to the changing role of science in warfare. The conception of the function of the scientific worker and technician

at the beginning of this War, as during the War of 1914-18, was confined to dealing with such technical devices of war as were beyond the scope of Service personnel. It is, however, becoming increasingly realized that science interpenetrates war activities over the whole field, and the scientific method is becoming a general mode of approach to the whole field of military action. During the last 150 years, tradition has ruled warfare and tactical surprise has played a small part. Following the War of 1914-18 an attitude of complacency has ruled and we have not attempted to apply scientific thinking further to war problems. On the other hand, the Germans, having been defeated, have spent the intervening period in making a far-reaching and comprehensive study of the reasons underlying that defeat. It seems to be a general feature of history that a defeated nation intensifies its study of warfare, and produces surprising tactical changes. Thus the enemy has obtained an advantage in that he has built up a powerful war machine based on the scientific method. We have accordingly to set ourselves the task, not only to catch up with him, but also to surpass him quickly.

In setting ourselves to this task we have two advantages. In the first place we have not been subjected to the intensive concentration on war machines to the exclusion of other fields of scientific endeavour; and secondly, whilst German methods are undoubtedly effective, they do not lend themselves to elasticity of thought in new developments. It is here that our free and democratic methods might be turned to good account. Addressing himself to the problem of mobilizing science to speeding up the war effort, Prof. Bernal said we have to apply scientific resources to the War in a strategic way. Thus we must apply all available forces to definite ends. In the past our efforts have been somewhat unbalanced. The probable yield from any effort must become the criterion. Military affairs are such that, owing to the difficulty of changing over, unless, say, a 100 per cent yield is to be expected in a year, the work is not worth doing. There exist generally several restrictive features which must be removed if scientific work is to be fully utilized. Perhaps the greatest handicap is the lack of direct contact between scientific workers and their opposite numbers in the Services. This is often accentuated by excessive secrecy. Some bottle-necks are due to established departmental procedure and others are due to small departments which are trying to deal with a greatly increased volume of work with unexpanded staff and equipment.

The full effects of science on war cannot be felt unless the scientific mind can be brought to bear on the war as a whole. This is not only a matter for the 'higher ups' but every scientific worker has now a widened responsibility, and a reevaluation of responsibility is required. This brought Prof. Bernal to his main point, that it is not sufficient merely to work harder than in peace-time. It is also necessary to examine the implications of the work and search for ways and means of expediting progress and improving organization. The person on the job is in a position where he or she can make useful suggestions in these directions, and the speed and efficiency with which we must work require of the person on the job that he does consider this to be a part of his responsibility. Here a special duty falls to the organized scientific workers, and it is now possible, without friction, to carry out the implications of this wider responsibility through joint consultation on matters affecting