

resulted in unusual fatigue, absenteeism and higher labour turnover. For the Red Cross Society and Order of St. John of Jerusalem, an investigation in industrial psychology has been conducted into the easier packing and handling of parcels destined for prisoners of war.

#### SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Several systematic studies have been and are being conducted by educational and social psycho-

logists on the effects on children of evacuation and air-raids; and other psychological investigations of similar, but wider, social import, under the aegis of one of the Ministries, can be reported.

This account does not by any means exhaust all the services that psychology is giving during the War. But it may serve to show the growing and increasingly recognized military, medical and social, practical value of the subject.

## LA SOCIÉTÉ DE PHYSIQUE ET D'HISTOIRE NATURELLE DE GENÈVE

By PROF. F. E. WEISS, F.R.S.

GENEVA has long been renowned as the home of eminent men of science. Some of these, the de Saussures and the de Candolles, belonged to families which, like the Darwins, have produced several generations of distinguished scientific men. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Physical and Natural History Society of Geneva has a deservedly high reputation, and that its *Memoirs* find a ready exchange with the publications of most learned societies. Last October the Society celebrated its hundred and fiftieth anniversary, and an account of the meeting of celebration fills the pages of the October number of its proceedings. The centenary celebration in 1890 was naturally made a great occasion and the centenary volume of the *Memoirs* of the Society contains a number of important scientific papers, as well as a history of the Society prepared by the secretary, Dr. A. H. Wartmann.

Like many learned societies, it had its origin in the desire of a number of men of various professions, but all interested in scientific discoveries, to meet and talk over their observations and theories. They met at first informally and probably at irregular intervals in each other's homes, and their number was for this reason naturally limited. For this reason also there seems to have been some doubt as to the exact time when the Society was founded. It really grew into existence. The first minutes of a meeting are dated August 5, 1791, but M. Vaucher, one of the originators of the Society, gives the date of its foundation as 1790, and this date has been by common consent accepted. No doubt even before that date the Society had an informal existence, for it possesses a manuscript which is said to have been read at one of its meetings in 1783. From the first minutes of a meeting mentioned above we learn that it met in the house of a M. H. A. Gosse, a pharmacist,

and a laureate of the Paris Academy of Sciences. Among those present were L. Jurine, a surgeon and naturalist; J. Tallot, whose interests were geological; Pastor Jean Pierre Vaucher, head of a boarding-school and an eminent botanist, interested in freshwater Algæ, one of the most well-known of which has since been named after him. Other members who formed the nucleus of the Society, but who were absent from this first meeting, were M. A. Pictet, a lawyer and professor of philosophy, interested in physics and the applied sciences; Colladon, a pharmaceutical chemist, and the botanist Gaudy. This group of young amateurs, as Vaucher called them, was soon joined by other members of senior standing and already distinguished in various branches of science. They included H. B. de Saussure and his son Theodore, François Huber, well known for his researches on the life of bees, Pyramus de Candolle, the eminent botanist, and Henri Boissier, rector of the Academy and in charge of the instruction in applied botany. His natural history collection became the nucleus of the future National History Museum of Geneva.

It was decided to ask the veteran Charles Bonnet, then seventy-one years old, to become the honorary patron of the Society. This for reasons of health he refused. Being further pressed he accepted the position, but he died two years later, leaving a bequest to the Society.

Ordinary meetings of the Society still remained somewhat informal. The host at whose house the meeting was held presided and read a paper which was followed by a general discussion. Observations published in scientific journals were also discussed by the meeting. One of the original members tells us that the discussions were always amicable and that contributions by young members were welcomed and encouraged. Occasionally

eminent men of science passing through Geneva were invited to the meetings. Such guests included Volta, Berthollet, Arago, Ampère, and others.

The strict religious tenets of the citizens of Geneva are reflected in the rules of the Society, one of which forbade any member or correspondent to admit publicly any religious principles that were not based on theism. Consequently the motto chosen for the Society was "Pro Deo et Natura".

In the early days of the Society—1792–1798—Geneva passed through stormy times, including a reign of terror in 1793 and ending in the annexation of Geneva by France in 1798. Except for an interruption of a few months in 1793, the Society continued its meetings, though they were occasionally prevented by untoward circumstances. When, after the restoration of Geneva to Switzerland, Pyramus de Candolle returned in 1817 as professor of natural history, he found the Society somewhat somnolent. He urged the institution of fortnightly instead of monthly meetings, and advised that the latter should be held in the lecture hall of the Society of Arts. This was done, and shortly afterwards it was decided to publish the *Memoirs* presented to the meetings, and up to date forty-one volumes have appeared containing 435 memoirs.

In 1890, when the centenary celebration of the Society took place; it numbered 450 ordinary and 50 honorary members. The celebrations of the hundred and fiftieth anniversary which took place in October of last year, are described in a special number of the *Compte Rendu* of its meetings. They took place in the large hall of the Athenæum in the presence of some three hundred members,

friends, and delegates from kindred Swiss societies. As the president, Mr. Revilliod, said in his opening address, with so much sorrow and misery in the world at large this was not the time to have great festivities, but it was deemed right to have a special meeting of the Society to remember the early days of its birth and growth and to honour its founders and the great men who contributed to its progress and prestige.

The subsequent speakers at the meeting included the Swiss Councillor for Public Instruction, the Rector of the University of Geneva, who dwelt on the close connexion between the University and the Society. This was emphasized by the subsequent addresses, in which three of the University professors dealt with the advances made in various sciences since the centenary celebrations of 1890. Prof. Weigel spoke of the progress achieved during the last fifty years in mathematics and physics. In connexion with the latter subject he dwelt on the important work done by Edward Sarasin and de la Rive in demonstrating the existence and the propagation of electromagnetic waves in space. The advances made by chemical researches in Geneva since 1890 were dealt with by Prof. Briner, while Prof. Fernand Chodat devoted his address to the progress of the biological sciences during the last fifty years.

The list of ordinary and honorary members of the Society elected between 1790 and 1940 follows the account of the meeting, and among the honorary members are the names of many British men of science, including Sir Joseph Hooker, Sir William Ramsay, Douglas Freshfield, and Sir Arthur Eddington.

## OBITUARIES

The Right Hon. Lord Stamp, G.C.B., G.B.E., F.B.A.

**L**ORD STAMP, Lady Stamp and the Hon. Wilfred Stamp were killed in a recent air attack on London. Lord Stamp was a man of whom many different obituary notices might be written. As a Civil Servant, as a business administrator, as a Government advisor and negotiator, as a writer on economic problems, he had so many achievements of distinction to his credit that adequate note of him in any one field crowds out reference to any other field. He worked as easily as ordinary mortals breathe or sleep. He could afford to say "yes" to innumerable invitations to speak or write on relatively unimportant occasions without losing power to do first-rate work on important occasions. His energy was incredible and his output superhuman. All this has been emphasized in one way or another by those who have paid tribute to his memory.

The branch of activity in which I came to know him best was different from any of those which I have named above. It was his activity in developing both the teaching of economics and research in it by others. In that field I learned what I believe to have been the central secret of his success and his public service.

Stamp was easily the most distinguished student produced by the London School of Economics and Political Science. He repaid his debt to the School many times over by the services which he rendered on the governing body from 1925, as vice-chairman of the governors from 1930 and, after the death of Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland in 1935, as chairman. In those positions his capacity and his prestige were of enormous assistance to an institution in a state of perpetual growth to meet an apparently inexhaustible demand. Growth implied both an external need for