

MINISTER'S STATEMENT.

THE war has brought into prominence the necessity for applications of science and research to all our problems of warfare and supply in a more direct manner than hitherto. Moreover, the circumstances call for a shorter lag between the research worker and practical application of his results than is normally the case in peacetime. This has been exemplified not only in the application of research to weapons of defence and offence, as witness the developments of radio location and methods of countering the newer types of mines, but also in unexpected problems of agriculture and supply—for instance, in the application of soil research to the problem of securing increased effectiveness of fertilizers, the speeding-up of large-scale production of linen flax, and the production of many types of substitute materials through the necessities arising from the war.

Two tendencies have become marked in consequence—firstly there is an increased readiness of practical men to seek scientific work for their guidance, and secondly, the scientific research workers are finding in the practical problems presented an interest which appeals to their full scientific powers. In general, a more real co-operation has developed between science and practice which augurs well for the future and for the problems of reconstruction, since one of the chief problems of this scientific age is to bring to bear the best scientific knowledge into our consideration of practical affairs.

The work of the Department during the year has therefore been mainly on problems arising from the exigencies of the war, and its full resources have been placed at the disposal of the various Departments and organizations to which it could be of assistance. The work which has been done and the results achieved during the past year demonstrate most convincingly the necessity of maintaining in times of peace and war alike a national organization for the promotion of scientific research. We cannot develop our natural resources wisely and well under normal circumstances without the application of scientific knowledge of their extent and potentialities; nor could we adapt ourselves rapidly enough to emergency conditions requiring the maximum concentration of research effort if a research organization and trained personnel were not already in existence. Research is vital to social and industrial stability and progress at all times, and it is in this knowledge that we must foster it to national advantage.

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and Industrial Research Department.