

" 'Of the whole agricultural produce of our Empire, the insect army destroys at least one-tenth every year -- Canada in field and fruit crops and in timber loses thirty million sterling annually; Australia loses twenty million'. These words were broadcast just a year ago by Sir Walter Morley Fletcher who, surveying the resources of the Empire and the natural forces of insects, plagues and disease which continually threaten them, gave as his conviction that 'of all nations in the world none has so great a need as England of bringing biology into her statecraft'. This need has now once more been emphasised, this time by the Committee which has just issued a report on the Education and Supply of Biologists, to which the Prime Minister has contributed a foreword. The Committee's chief conclusions are that there is a substantial and increasing demand from Government departments for biologists for service in this country and in the colonies; and that there is a smaller but growing demand from concerns engaged in agricultural production overseas and in industry in this country. But the present supply of biologists falls short of this demand; and the immediate problem is to bring the supply up to standard in numbers and quality. There are two main reasons for this deficiency. The best brains are attracted elsewhere because at present biologists have not the same prospects of income and security as those in other branches of Government service; and many of the men who do offer themselves have not had an adequate training in their subject. If Government posts for biologists could be made as good, in salary and chances of promotion, as the Indian Civil or Colonial Services, the schools and universities would be much more willing to adapt their curricula, and ensure a steady supply of well-trained candidates. The importance of this will need no emphasising to those who remember Sir Walter Morley Fletcher's impressive words. "