

Notes and News

Her Majesty's Stationery Office has recently issued the seventh volume of documents on *Constitutional Relations between Britain and India*. They concern the Cabinet Mission sent to India in the spring of 1946 by Prime Minister Attlee. There was still hope that an independent India might be a united one, though hope was fading. The Mission consisted of Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Mr. A. V. Alexander, then First Lord of the Admiralty. A reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* suggests that the view often held that A. V. Alexander was a mere passenger must be revised. "Straightforward, down-to-earth, the only working-class politician on the scene, Alexander was determined to prevent the Mission from forgetting its epic responsibility to Britain, to ordinary Indians, to the past and to the future."

Baptists also have perhaps done less than justice to one of their few politicians to rise to high office. Born in Weston-super-Mare in 1885, the son of an artisan engineer, Alexander's schooling was in Bristol. After service in World War I, he entered Parliament for the Hillsborough division of Sheffield in 1922, sponsored by the Co-operative Movement. He was given junior office in the first Labour government and in the second became First Lord of the Admiralty. That Churchill put him back in this office in 1940 (and that he survived the stream of missives from Churchill), that Attlee kept him in the same office in 1945, that he was Minister of Defence from 1946-50 and on moving to the House of Lords undertook the difficult task of Leader of the small band of Labour Peers indicate unusual administrative competence and the confidence he inspired.

It was certainly fortunate for Regent's Park College that Alexander was at the Admiralty in 1941 and ready to listen to representations against the requisitioning of the property. He put himself down in *Who's Who* as a Baptist lay preacher and in his years of retirement at West Mersea maintained his Baptist connections and his sturdy Protestantism.



Statistical analysis can be a difficult and perilous occupation. It depends on the scheme adopted and on decisions which must sometimes be arbitrary. Moreover, recent examination of the records of both Regent's Park and Bristol Colleges indicate that they lack both completeness and consistency. The number of graduates from Oxford and Cambridge who have had further theological training at R.P.C. is without doubt somewhat larger than was indicated in Dr. Payne's paper in our issue for January, 1978. He wishes this to be noted.



The tercentenary of the publication of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and the 350th anniversary of John Bunyan's birth are being celebrated this year. A committee at Bedford has organised an impressive programme of events ranging from formal lectures to a pop-style cantata. The festivities started in February but continue until November. Details may be obtained from the Town Hall, Bedford.



The Annual General Meeting on Monday, 24th April, at 4 p.m. in the Institute Hall, Westminster Chapel, will be preceded by tea. For tea tickets (30 pence each) please send immediately to the Baptist Historical Society, 4 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4AB, enclosing remittance and stamped addressed envelope.. Following the Annual General Meeting, Professor Keith Robbins will give the fifth Henton Lecture.



There are still a few vacancies at the Baptist Historical Society Summer School which will be held at Keswick Hall College of Education, Norwich, 13th-16th July 1978. The varied programme includes lectures, discussions and outings. For further details, write to the Treasurer of the B.H.S., 148 Greenvale Road, London SE9 1PQ.