METALS IN NATIONAL DEFENSE

By Dr. ZAY JEFFRIES

GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY

When near the middle of 1940, the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense was established, it was only natural that great stress was put on the importance of metals and minerals and equally natural that Dr. C. K. Leith should find himself in the center of this activity. Dr. Leith has made a profound study of the relationships between minerals and war. He has served the government, directly and indirectly, for more than a quarter of a century and, for the past twenty years, he has advocated the stockpiling of such minerals as are not obtainable or of which there is a deficiency in the Western Hemisphere. He has eloquently pointed out that the nations controlling the great mineral deposits of the world should lead in both industrial and war strength; that no continent is self-sufficient in all the minerals necessary for either a complete industrial development or the most efficient prosecution of war; that the mineral distribution is such that no continent can obtain all the necessary minerals without sea transportation, and hence that the value of sea control can hardly be overestimated.

Dr. Leith early called on the National Academy of Sciences for technologic help on manganese and tin. By February, 1941, the problems were multiplying to such an extent that he asked the academy to arrange for a comprehensive organization to provide the Office of Production Management, successor to the Advisory Commission, with advice on metals and minerals.

Dr. Frank B. Jewett, the president of the academy,