HIGHLIGHTS OF BRITISH SCIENCE

‘Britain has a great tradition in natural science. From the time of the so-called
scientific revolution of the mid-seventeenth century with the foundation of the
Royal Society at the heart of it, British scientists have been in the forefront of
advances not merely in fundamental science but also in its application to the
practical problems of everyday life. Science, of course, knows no national boun-
daries and it owes much of its progress and vitality to the free exchange of in-
formation and ideas between scientists in all countries. It is nevertheless true that,
for a variety of reasons, some countries, of which Britain is one, have made con-
tributions out of all proportion to their physical size and population. Today we are in
the midst of a worldwide economic recession which has indeed affected Britain
more severely than some other highly industrialized nations. Since economic
progress and with it our living standards depend nowadays almost entirely on
advances in science and in technology based upon it, it is perhaps not surprising
that some members of the public should wonder whether we have fallen behind
other nations and whether our expenditure on science and scientific research is
being misdirected. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our record during the
past twenty-five years is an enviable one and our scientific research is vigorous as
ever, flushed with success and full of promise. Britain has made and continues to
make outstanding contributions in many and diverse fields of science. Some of these
are set out in this book and it is my hope that its contents will not only stimulate
appreciation of some highlights in British science but will indicate also its promise
for the future.’

Extract from Lord Todd’s Preface

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