

News and Views

Prof. E. H. Minns, F.B.A.

PROF. ELLIS HOVELL MINNS will retire shortly from the Disney professorship of archaeology in the University of Cambridge, which he has held since 1927, when he succeeded the late Sir William Ridgway. Prof. Minns has been a fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, of which he had been an undergraduate, since 1899, and became president in 1928. After taking his degree at Cambridge he studied Oriental languages in Paris, and spent three years in Russia, studying its languages, history, art and antiquities. On his return to Cambridge in 1901 he was appointed librarian and lecturer in Russian in his college, and in 1906 became University lecturer in palaeography. As an archaeologist he is best known for his pre-eminence as an authority on the peoples and cultures of ancient Scythia, upon which his "Scythians and Greeks", published in 1913, is of outstanding value. His services to this branch of archaeological studies was recognized by his election in 1925 as a corresponding member of the Russian Academy for the History of Material Culture. Prof. Minns is a fellow of the British Academy; and during the Great War his linguistic abilities were recognized by his appointment to the censorship of uncommon languages, which he held from 1915 until 1918.

New Autogyro for Army Service

A DEMONSTRATION of vertical take-off and landing by the new type C.40 Autogyro, referred to as the 'jumping gyro', was given recently at the Army Staff College, Camberley. Mr. Brie made several successful take-offs and landings on the Owl's cricket ground, which measures only 150 yards by 100 yards and is almost entirely surrounded by buildings and high trees. In addition to making vertical rises from the ground of 8-10 ft., the machine was put through a series of evolutions in the air illustrating its control and ease of handling in a confined space. The most outstanding of these was an entirely unintentional one at the close of the display, when the pilot, judging that he had not sufficient margin to clear some trees, throttled his engine back and put the machine down almost exactly upon the spot from which he had started. Such a manoeuvre would have been impossible with the more conventional type of aeroplane. This display, given on a bad day with intermittent rain causing inevitable air currents and eddies near the ground, is considered to be a much more searching test of the machine's controllability than was the recent test of a direct-lift helicopter made in a big hall in Berlin. Although flying in a building gave an appearance of complete control in a very confined space, actually the steady performance of the machine would be materially helped by the perfect calmness of the air indoors. It is considered that this type of machine will facilitate the work of Army communication by reason of the fact that, requiring practically

no horizontal run, it is independent of the condition of the landing surface. Not only will it not need a specially prepared aerodrome, but it should also be able to operate from land where even shelling or bombing has been experienced. It is also obviously suited to operating from the deck of a ship.

Leopold Gmelin and his "Handbuch"

To commemorate the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Leopold Gmelin, the Deutsche chemische Gesellschaft has issued a sample booklet with lengthy extracts from the "Handbuch" and an illustrated brochure with Gmelin's portrait and historical notes on the growth of this monumental treatise. Gmelin belonged to an ancient Swabian family of apothecaries established in the seventeenth century at Tübingen, where his grandfather held the University chair of chemistry, one of the oldest in Germany. His father became professor of botany and chemistry at Göttingen, where Leopold was born on August 2, 1788. After graduating in the faculty of Medicine at Göttingen, he studied chemistry at Tübingen and in Vienna. Later he travelled in Italy, where he interested himself in the geology of the volcanic rocks, but his chief interest lay in chemistry, and he decided to complete his training in Vauquelin's laboratory in Paris and at the same time make personal contacts with Gay-Lussac, Thenard and Haüy. In 1817, he was appointed to the chair of chemistry at Heidelberg, where he began to write his treatise, the first edition appearing in three volumes in 1817. It met with immediate success, and several editions had to follow. In 1830, Berzelius praised it in glowing terms. The fourth edition was translated into English by the Cavendish Society in 1846, and included organic chemistry for the last time. Gmelin was occupied with the organic part until his death in 1853. The eighth edition, begun in 1922, is at present being compiled by no fewer than seventy experts, who expect to finish their task by 1943 and to secure a lasting future for this valuable documentation. Both the sample booklet and the brochure may be obtained free on application to the Gmelin-Redaktion, Berlin W.35, Tiergartenstrasse 10.

Ornithological Library for Australia

It has recently been announced that Mr. C. M. Mathews has presented his ornithological library to the Commonwealth of Australia, and that it will be housed in the National Library at Canberra. Mr. Mathews, who is the author of twelve large volumes on the "Birds of Australia", has been collecting books on ornithology for the last forty years, and his library consists of some four thousand works and pamphlets. Although many ornithologists may not agree with Mr. Mathews' systematic work as a whole, all will admit that he has done more than anyone to elucidate the early history of ornithology in Australia. He has