

## NEWS and VIEWS

## The Royal Society of Arts

H.R.H. THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH has graciously accepted the invitation of the Royal Society of Arts to become its president. The Royal Family has been closely connected with the Royal Society of Arts for more than a hundred years. Prince Albert became the Society's president in 1843, and in that capacity initiated the Great International Exhibition held in Hyde Park in 1851. Other Royal presidents have been Their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII), the Prince of Wales (later King George V) and the Duke of Connaught.

## The British Museum (Natural History)

Sir Clive Forster-Cooper, F.R.S.

SIR CLIVE FORSTER-COOPER will retire from the post of director of the British Museum (Natural History) on September 30, after ten arduous years of office, and a much longer period spent in the service of museums and libraries. His active interest in museum problems goes back to the days when, as a young man, he studied in the American Museum of Natural History under the late Prof. H. F. Osborn; but he was not connected with a museum in an official capacity until some years later. In 1914 he became superintendent of the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, and immediately began a much-needed reorganisation. By dint of drastic pruning and rearrangement, he transformed an old-fashioned teaching collection into a modern museum well adapted to the changed conditions after the First World War. During this period, Mr. Forster-Cooper was elected a syndic of the FitzWilliam Museum, and also to the University Building Syndicate of which he ultimately became chairman. The scheme for a new university library had its origin in a suggestion which he made soon after his election to the latter body.

When the Principal Trustees appointed him director of the Natural History Museum in 1938 he began to replan the exhibition galleries, and here his long experience in Cambridge was of great value. For the first year all went well, and important experiments in exhibition technique were carried out; but the international situation gradually became more threatening, and early in 1939 all these plans had to give way to others for the evacuation of the collections and libraries, and to general precautionary work. These tasks were scarcely finished when air raids on London began. In quick succession the roofs were burnt off the Herbarium and the Shell Gallery, and further damage was done to the building by high-explosive bombs. All the time that the Director was dealing with the day-to-day hazards of war, he was laying his plans for the future. They were summarized in a memorandum which was adopted by the Trustees as a basis for future action, although any hopes of their immediate realization were dashed when a flying bomb, which exploded in the Cromwell Road in July 1944, wrecked almost the whole of the interior fittings in the front galleries of the Departments of Geology and Zoology. After the War he supervised the return of the libraries and collections, and the reopening of those parts of the ground-floor of the Museum still fit for use. His services received official recognition with the award of a knighthood in the New Year Honours of 1946.

Mr. N. B. Kinnear

MR. NORMAN BOYD KINNEAR, who has been appointed to succeed Sir Clive Forster-Cooper as from October 1, was educated at Edinburgh Academy and Trinity College, Glonaalmond. After acting for two years as an assistant, on a voluntary basis, in the Royal Scottish Museum, he became for twelve years curator of the Bombay Natural History Museum and from 1908 until 1919 was assistant editor of the important Bombay Natural History Society's *Journal*. In 1920 he joined the staff of the British Museum as an assistant keeper, and after a period as deputy keeper was, in 1945, appointed to the keepership of the Department of Zoology.

Mr. Kinnear's time in India gave him the opportunity of much work in the field and of acquiring a wide knowledge as a field naturalist of the living fauna of the country in general in addition to his main line of work as an ornithologist. Most of his published work, chiefly in the *Ibis* and the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*, deals with birds, especially the avifauna of the East, as, for example, the birds of the Eastern Ghats, of central south Arabia, Chinese Turkestan, north-east Burma, and south-east Tibet among others.

During the War, in addition to the struggle of keeping the Department of Zoology going under very adverse circumstances, he did signal service first in helping with the evacuation of the Museum's collections to safer places than London and then, after the War, in the complicated business of their return, unpacking and resettlement, work which is still in progress and in present circumstances requires much thought and planning. Mr. Kinnear in 1943 was elected president of the British Ornithologists' Union and is the present chairman of the British Section of the International Committee for Bird Protection.

## Science in Scotland

UNDER the title "Science in Scotland", Dr. W. P. H. Wightman gives a very readable account of the development and work of the Rowett Research Institute in Animal Nutrition, the Macaulay Institute for Soil Research, the Moredun Institute of the Animal Diseases Research Association, the Institute of Animal Genetics, the Hannah Dairy Research Institute, the Torry Research Station for fishery research and the Scottish Society for Research in Plant Breeding ("Science in Scotland: the Work of the Scottish Research Institutions", by Dr. W. P. H. Wightman. Published for Scottish Convention. Pp. 56. Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1947. 2s. net). Some of the achievements of these research institutions are indicated, while in a final chapter the foundation of the Seaweed Research Association is noted and the establishment of a Scottish Forest Products Research Station and of a Sea Loch Development Association is suggested. Dr. Wightman is not convinced as to the advisability of separate Scottish institutions for most manufacturing traditional industries, and suggests that the principles guiding the establishment of distinctive Scottish research institutions should be in the main the development of predominant Scottish resources; the special problems arising out of Scottish customs and conditions; the need for economy in time for consultation even at the cost of duplicating overhead charges; and the appeal to national enthusiasm and local interest.