

which took the greater part of his predecessor's time. His choice is therefore a very happy one, in so far as the benefit that the Council will derive from his able leadership will not be at the cost of a decline in his more directly scientific activities.

Vice-Chancellorship of the University of Sheffield: Sir Irvine Masson, M.B.E., F.R.S.

SIR IRVINE MASSON, vice-chancellor of the University of Sheffield, is retiring in September. He was born in Melbourne, the son of Sir David Orme Masson, professor of chemistry in the University of Melbourne, and it was in Melbourne that he was educated and began his chemical research. Then came study in the Universities of Edinburgh and London with Sir James Walker and Sir William Ramsay respectively; he was appointed lecturer in chemistry at University College, London, in 1912, and reader in 1919. During the First World War, after a period of service in the R.N.V.R., he was on the staff of the Research Department of the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich. From 1919 until 1924 he was honorary secretary of the Chemical Society of Great Britain and Ireland. In 1924 he was appointed professor of chemistry and head of the Department of Science at Durham, and it was there that he carried out his investigations into nitration and the organic compounds of iodine, work which is characterized by elegance of method and profound insight into both physical and organic chemistry. He also made important contributions to the deliberations of the Royal Commission set up to consider the constitution of the University of Durham.

In 1938 Sir Irvine was appointed vice-chancellor of the University of Sheffield, and in the following year he was elected to fellowship of the Royal Society. From the outbreak of war in 1939 he acted also as director of a team of government research workers housed in the Chemistry Department at Sheffield. He served as chairman of the Amatol Committee and as a member of other committees concerned with the supply of explosives. His Service experience and knowledge of official methods derived from the First World War were of great value at this time. But in all the press of war-time activity, he never lost sight of the tasks that peace would bring, and towards the end he began progressively to detach himself so as to be fully prepared for them. The end of the War brought to Sheffield, in common with all other Universities, innumerable problems arising chiefly from the great expansion of student numbers. To the solution of these problems, Sir Irvine brought a cool judgment, a steady sense of values and strong convictions about the true nature and purpose of a university, the part which it should play in the life of the nation, and the proper standards of university work. These qualities, combined with his grasp of the details of university administration, and his mastery of the intricacies of university finance, have been of incalculable value to Sheffield, and have given weight to his counsels in the Vice-Chancellors' Committee. He received the honour of knighthood in 1950. On his retirement at the end of the present session Sir Irvine will leave behind him the record of a difficult task ably and devotedly performed.

Prof. J. M. Whittaker, F.R.S.

JOHN MACNAGHTEN WHITTAKER, professor of pure mathematics in the University of Liverpool since 1933, is to succeed Sir Irvine Masson as vice-chancellor of the University of Sheffield. Prof. Whittaker

and his father, Sir Edmund Whittaker, formerly professor of mathematics in the University of Edinburgh, are both Fellows of the Royal Society. Prof. Whittaker, who was born in 1905, has written many papers on special topics in pure mathematics; but his principal contributions to knowledge have been connected with the theory of integral functions, including the formulation of some new problems, and the theory of expansions in series of basic polynomials. He was educated at Fettes, the University of Edinburgh and at Trinity College, Cambridge. He received his first degree in Edinburgh, was awarded the Vans Dunlop Scholarship in Mathematics, and was lecturer in mathematics during 1927-29. In Cambridge he was a Scholar of Trinity College, Wrangler in the Mathematical Tripos, Smith's Prizeman, Fellow and lecturer at Pembroke College, University lecturer, and Adams Prizeman. In the University of Liverpool he was Dean of the Faculty of Science during 1947-50 and, at various times, member of a number of administrative and academic committees. He joined the Army at the outbreak of the Second World War and was a member of a group in Anti-aircraft Command charged with the scientific investigation of artillery techniques. In 1941 he was transferred to the Western Desert for an operational investigation of the use of artillery in the field. He was given the rank of lieutenant-colonel in 1944 and, during 1944-45, was deputy scientific adviser to the Army Council.

Corday-Morgan Medal and Prize of the Chemical Society

THE Chemical Society has awarded the Corday-Morgan Medal and Prize for 1950 to Dr. R. S. Nyholm in recognition of his outstanding experimental work on co-ordination compounds with special reference to his discovery of tervalent nickel complexes. Dr. Nyholm, who is thirty-five years old, is an Australian and went to Britain in 1947 with an Imperial Chemical Industries fellowship which he held at University College, London. After holding a lectureship for two years at the College, he returned early this year to Australia to take up an appointment at the New South Wales University of Technology, Sydney. The Corday-Morgan award, which consists of a silver medal and a monetary prize, was instituted following a bequest to the Chemical Society by the late Sir Gilbert Morgan (president, 1933-35); it is made annually to the British scientific worker who shall during the year in question have, in the judgment of the Council, published the most meritorious contribution to experimental chemistry and who, at the date of publication, shall not have attained the age of thirty-six years. In order that all relevant publications may be taken into account, the award is not considered until twelve months after the end of the year in question.

Freedom of Information

IN connexion with the Bill dealing with the law of libel now before the House of Commons (see p. 381 of this issue) the recent action in the Central Criminal Court against The Times Publishing Co., Ltd., is not without significance. The action was brought because *The Times* had inserted an advertisement containing a mining company's statement to its shareholders which argued against the limitations of dividends as a menace to the company's business. Mr. Justice McNair rejected the argument that the advertisement was intended to promote the election of a