

NEWS and VIEWS

Chairmanship of the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy: Sir John Cockcroft, C.B.E., F.R.S.

IN *Nature* of March 8 (p. 395) it was announced that Sir Henry Tizard was retiring from the chairmanship of the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy. He is now retiring also from the chairmanship of the Defence Research Policy Committee, and will be succeeded by Sir John Cockcroft. Sir John's scientific career, which brought him the award of the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1951, is well known, and his extraordinary ability as an administrator and organizer of scientific research is scarcely less widely appreciated. The Atomic Energy Research Establishment, of which he was appointed director in 1946 (see *Nature*, 157, 128; 1946), has played an essential part in the large-scale development of the British atomic energy programme, and has grown under his direction into one of the foremost centres of nuclear research in the country. The successful construction of two experimental piles and of four major nuclear instruments (of which Sir John gave an admirable account recently before the Royal Society) is a tribute to his ability to inspire a large and diverse body of scientific and technical effort. It is a source of continued admiration to those who know him that he is able to combine the direction of a large establishment with a detailed and up-to-date knowledge of scientific developments both at home and overseas. There are many projects, not only within the Government service, but also in universities and in industry, which owe much to his advice and encouragement, given most generously and often in person. It is gratifying to know that his new post will not take him from Harwell; the Government is fortunate in being able to unite two vital interests under a single head who brings to his responsibilities such a wealth of wisdom and experience.

Physics in Western Australia:

Prof. A. D. Ross, C.B.E.

PROF. A. D. ROSS retires in May from the chair of physics in the University of Western Australia after an association with the University lasting nearly forty years. Born in Glasgow in 1883, he had a distinguished career at the University of Glasgow and at Göttingen, where his interests were, particularly, in the fields of magnetism and spectroscopy. Upon the foundation of the University of Western Australia, Prof. Ross was appointed in 1912 to the chair of mathematics and physics, arriving in Perth to take up duties early in 1913, and in the next year classes commenced. When mathematics and physics were separated in 1929, he took over the chair of physics. Except for a visit to Europe during the First World War and again in 1951, Prof. Ross has given uninterrupted service as a teacher, scientific investigator and administrator, and he is the last in office of the eight foundation professors. Prof. Ross has played a distinguished part in building up the University tradition in the State of Western Australia both as professor of mathematics and of physics and in the numerous posts he has held in scientific and other organizations inside and outside the University. He and other professors brought from Britain in the early days of Australian universities had the distinction and privilege of being agents for the transmission of high educational standards and sound cultural traditions from the European universities to

the young country of Australia. Prof. Ross has been chairman of the Music Advisory Board, president of the Australian Branch of the Institute of Physics, president of the Royal Society of Western Australia, chairman of the Western Australian Division of the National Research Council, and he has served science and the community in many other ways. During the Second World War Prof. Ross was appointed a member of the Commonwealth Optical Munitions Panel, deputy director of camouflage and consulting physicist to the Royal Australian Navy. He was made a C.B.E. in 1949.

Prof. C. J. B. Clews

DR. C. J. B. CLEWS, who succeeds Prof. A. D. Ross, has chosen as his main field of inquiry the elucidation of organic crystal structures by means of X-ray diffraction analysis. His most recent work of this type was done in the Cavendish Laboratory between 1945 and 1948, where he held an I.C.I. fellowship. Since 1948, he has been a principal scientific officer at the National Physical Laboratory, in charge of X-ray and electron diffraction investigations and electron microscopy, with particular reference to metals and alloys. Prior to the War, before taking up a post as lecturer in physics at Queen Mary College, University of London, he worked with Dr. (now Prof.) Kathleen Lonsdale at the Royal Institution, and spent a year in Prof. H. Mark's laboratory in Vienna. Between 1940 and 1945, Dr. Clews was active in the scientific war effort, first in the Ministry of Supply extra-mural project under Sir Lawrence Bragg on the location of long-range artillery, then in the Air Defence Research and Development Establishment. During 1942-44 he was a member of the Army Operation Research Group and was concerned, among other problems, with the location of V2 launching sites. After the landings in France, he served in Western Europe with the rank of major on the Scientific Intelligence Staff. Dr. Clews, who was born in 1912, received his early training in physics under Prof. H. R. Robinson at Queen Mary College, London, and received his Ph.D. for research there on the electrical conductivity of strong electrolytes. His intention is to develop work along two main lines in Western Australia; on one hand, he proposes to continue X-ray crystallographic researches on organic molecules, and, on the other, to develop the use of soft X-ray spectroscopy in studies of the solid state.

Gold Medal of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada: Mr. A. Thomson, O.B.E.

THE Gold Medal for 1952 of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada has been awarded to Mr. Andrew Thomson, controller of meteorological services of the Meteorological Division, Canadian Federal Department of Transport, for his outstanding contributions to national and world well-being. Born in Dobbinton, Ontario, in 1893, Mr. Thomson graduated in physics in the University of Toronto, and in 1917 was appointed Townsend student in physics in Harvard University. He later joined the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and in 1919 went on a solar eclipse expedition to the interior of Brazil. He was in charge of the investigations on atmospheric electricity on a 26-month cruise around the world aboard the research ship *Carnegie*. In 1922 Mr. Thomson went to the Apia Observatory, Samoa, first as scientific adviser and in the following year as director. In 1929 he was appointed aerologist