

evidence of these works. He was at his best in the field among living insects, where he had a quite amazing flair for the 'good thing' and in consequence added considerably to our knowledge of the British fauna in nearly all orders of insects. Insect luminosity, and the complex inter-relationships of the inhabitants of plant galls, fascinated him and were the subject of several papers; fossil insects, myrmecophiles, insect stridulation and the morphology of beetle larvæ also attracted his attention. Up to the time of his retirement, due to ill health attributable to service with the Seaforth Highlanders during the First World War, he took a most active part in the proceedings of the societies to which he belonged. He was president of the South London Natural History Society in 1920, 1921 and 1931 and of the Royal Entomological Society during 1940-41. He is mourned by a very wide circle of friends, who will always remember gratefully the help he gave so freely and modestly to all who sought it, from his unusually wide store of knowledge and experience.

N. D. RILEY

Mr. E. G. Dymond

EDMUND GILBERT DYMOND died suddenly in Edinburgh on October 26. He was born at Hairwain, South Wales, in which town his father was engaged in business as a civil engineer. Between the ages of twelve and eighteen persistent ill-health made regular schooling impossible, but at the latter age he entered St. John's College, Cambridge, and thereafter lived an active and productive life. Only his early death reminded his friends that his energy and enthusiasm must often have outmatched his strength.

Dymond obtained first-class honours in physics in Part 2 of the Natural Sciences Tripos in 1922, and was awarded a Hutchinson research studentship by St. John's. In 1925 his College elected him to a fellowship. He had spent two of the intervening years in research at the Cavendish Laboratory, and the third as International Education Board Fellow at Göttingen. The following year he spent in Princeton. During the whole of this time, and throughout the next five years, when he was back in Cambridge, Dymond investigated various problems of electron collisions in gases.

In 1932 Dymond moved to Edinburgh, first as Carnegie Teaching Fellow, then as lecturer, and after 1948 as reader in natural philosophy. Soon afterwards his main research interest changed, and as a member of the Wordie expedition to North-West Greenland in 1937 he obtained records of cosmic ray

intensity, using balloon-borne apparatus up to a height of about twelve miles. About the same time he released his first balloons from the Edinburgh district in similar investigations. This work remained interrupted throughout the Second World War, but Dymond continued his contribution to upper-atmosphere physics at Kew Observatory, where he developed and perfected the British *radio-sonde*. He returned to Edinburgh in 1946.

Building up equipment again after the War, and gathering a small research team around him, he was favourably placed to add considerably to our knowledge not only of cosmic radiation at great heights, but also of ozone distribution. However, only one major investigation was complete at the time of his death. The progress of the others will be slower for lack of his direction.

N. FEATHER

Prof. L. Lapicque

COLLEAGUES and friends in every country will regret the death, at the age of eighty-six, of Louis Lapicque, professor at the Sorbonne during 1919-36 and the leading figure in French physiology. His early researches were biochemical and they were followed by an expedition to the Andaman Islands to collect anthropological data; but in 1902, after his return to France, he took up the studies of excitability in nerve and muscle for which he became famous.

Lapicque used new methods to explore the relation between the duration and the strength of an effective electric stimulus: his curves showed the inadequacy of Nernst's treatment and led to new ideas based on the measurement of the 'chronaxie', a quantity giving the time factor of the excitation process. In collaboration with Mme. Lapicque he studied the chronaxie relations of a wide variety of tissues and demonstrated their essential similarity. The theory of isochronism which he afterwards developed may not have had all the far-reaching implications suggested by it, but his ingenious experiments and trenchant exposition have a classical quality which will be long remembered.

Between the two World Wars, Prof. Lapicque played a decisive part in the development of physiology in France. He was a welcome figure at international gatherings, where he spoke lucidly and with conviction on the problems of scientific co-operation. Vigorous in body as in mind, a keen yachtsman and a charming host, he was a worthy representative of the great traditions of his country.

E. D. ADRIAN

NEWS and VIEWS

Chair of Mining in the Imperial College, London:

Prof. J. A. S. Ritson

PROF. J. A. S. RITSON vacated the University of London chair of mining at the Royal School of Mines, Imperial College, in October 1952, after a distinguished tenure of seventeen years. He is a graduate of the University of Durham, and started his professional career as inspector of mines in the Scottish, Yorkshire and South Wales coalfields. After distinguished service in the Army during the First World War he occupied the chair of mining in the University of Leeds during 1923-35, where he devoted

much of his research to the improvement of mine rescue appliances and shot-firing techniques. Since his appointment to the Royal School of Mines, Prof. Ritson has maintained his keen interest in coal mining, and rapidly gained a high reputation as an expert on problems of metalliferous mining, based on experience won in various parts of the world. Among his multifarious duties he has acted for many years as Crown mineral agent, as a member of the Coal Commission, and as deputy chairman of the Mineral Resources Committee of the Ministry of Fuel and Power; during the Second World War he joined that Ministry for a