University News:

Edinburgh

DR D. MICHIE, at present reader in the Department of Machine Intelligence and Perception, has been appointed to a personal chair in machine intelligence.

Nottingham

DR W. SMITH, at present senior principal scientific officer at the Ministry of Technology, Warren Spring Laboratory, Stevenage, has been appointed to the Lady Trent chair of chemical engineering and the headship of the Department of Chemical Engineering, on the retirement of Professor R. Edgeworth Johnstone. Dr G. H. A. Hübscher, at present senior lecturer in the Department of Medical Biochemistry and Pharmacology in the University of Birmingham, has been appointed to the chair of biochemistry.

Ulster

DR N. J. GIBSON, of the University of Manchester and at present visiting associate professor in the Department of Economics in the University of Wisconsin, has been appointed to the chair of economics, and Dr R. H. Tredgold, reader in physics in the University College of North Wales, has been appointed to the chair of physics.

Appointments

DR CHARLES L. DUNHAM, at present director of the Division of Biology and Medicine of the US Atomic Energy Commission, has been appointed chairman of the Division of Medical Sciences of the US National Research Council, in succession to Dr R. Keith Canman.

Announcements

THE following have been elected fellows of the Australian Academy of Science: DR J. A. BARKER, chief research scientist in the CSIRO Division of Physical Chemistry, Melbourne; PROFESSOR P. O. BISHOP, professor of physiology in the University of Sydney; PROFESSOR R. HANBURY BROWN, professor of physics in the University of Sydney; DR A. McL. MATHIESON, chief research scientist in the CSIRO Division of Chemical Physics, Melbourne; PROFESSOR G. J. V. NOSSAL, director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, Melbourne; DR J. R. PHILIP, assistant chief of the CSIRO Division of Plant Industry, Canberra; DR R. O. SLATYER, associate chief of the CSIRO Division of Land Research, Canberra.

THE prizewinners of the Feldberg Foundation awards for 1967 are Professor R. Stämpfli, of the I. Physiologisches Institut, Universität des Saarlandes, who will lecture on "Progress on the Node of Ranvier" at the Department of Physiology, University College London, on May 23, and Professor W. A. H. Rushton, of the Physiological Laboratory, Cambridge, who will lecture on "The Chemical Basis of Colour Vision" at the Zoological Institute of the University of Munich on June 14. The Feldberg Foundation for German-English Scientific Exchange was established in 1961 to promote Anglo-German friendship in medical and biological science.

THE E. O. Lawrence Memorial Award has been awarded by the US Atomic Energy Commission to the following: MORTIMER M. ELKIND, of the National Cancer Institute, US National Institutes of Health; JOHN M. GOOGIN, of the Union Carbide Nuclear Division, Oak Ridge; ALLAN F. HENRY, manager of reactor theory, Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory, Westinghouse, Pittsburgh; JOHN O. RASMUSSEN, senior staff member of the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory and professor in the University of California; ROBERT N. THORN, group leader in the Theoretical Division, Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, Los Alamos. Each scientist received a cheque for \$5,000, a citation and a gold medal.

THE American Geophysical Union has made the following awards: *Twenty-ninth William Bowie Medal* to Dr Lloyd V. Berkner, chairman of the board of the Southwest Center for Advanced Studies, in recognition of his contributions to fundamental geophysics; *Sixth John Adam Fleming Medal* to Dr E. H. Vestine, of the Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, for his research into fundamental aspects of geomagnetism, atmospheric electricity and aeronomy; *Sixth James B. Macelwane Award* to Dr M. Talwani, professor at Columbia University, in recognition of his contributions to the geophysical sciences.

CORRESPONDENCE

Is Weather Predictable?

SIR,—Your leading article of April 29 is in need of some correction which I will attempt to provide by reminding your readers of a previous *News and Views* item (211, 223; 1966).

It is unfortunately true that some extravagant claims have appeared recently in the press to the effect that the meteorologist will be able, almost without question, to provide an accurate, objectively based forecast for some two weeks ahead if a global description of the atmosphere is available to him at the initial time. Such claims can embarrass the informed meteorologist as they could mislead the public. They arise, however, because the meteorologist does begin to see the possibility of making such forecasts.

The position is, as your earlier column stated, that the meteorologist is anxious to determine how far ahead (beyond the presently achieved couple of days) and in what detail the evolution of the atmosphere is predictable and he is seeking his way forward to undertaking this ambitious test with the theory currently developed by him. This is the basis of the proposed Global Atmospheric Research Programme (GARP). It involves a number of preliminary sub-programmes and, for the programme itself, a truly global set of observations of suitable density in the horizontal and the vertical. It therefore demands, on an experimental basis, a true World Weather Watch—but WWW is often used to mean much less and then has operational justification outside the context of GARP.

A committee, international or otherwise, can hardly be charged with irresponsibility for considering the feasibility of such a tremendously important experiment—for the science and for the possible economic returns. Meteorologists would indeed be failing in their responsibility to society if, seeing the possibilities, they did not explore them. They are aware that many basic problems are involved, one of which (the limits of validity of the classical equations of motion of a fluid) has been expounded recently by the President of the Royal Meteorological Society, Dr. G. D. Robinson, and was referred to in your leading article and elsewhere in the same issue. This is not the place to argue Dr. Robinson's thesis except to say that he has partly answered his own questions by reminding us that the equations of motion of a turbulent fluid in any useful form are always empirical and to be justified *a posteriori*. Science is empirical, and where it deserves some order, as already in a large part of the evolution of the atmosphere, it finds that order a proper subject of its study. It does not advance by erecting principles of impossibility, except in a very few basic respects. The Balmer series made classical electrodynamics impossible, not the other way round.

Yours faithfully,

P. A. SHEPPARD

Imperial College of Science and Technology,
London, S.W.7.