

leigh, to nominate a committee to advise as to its constitution and to direct such work as might be necessary in connexion with the maintenance of standards. It was suggested that the functions of the International Conference of Weights and Measures might be enlarged with the view of some combination of effort. The Electrical Conference was of opinion, however, that the Permanent Electrical Commission should be a distinct body.

Stratton was closely concerned in the consequences which followed from these two resolutions and took an active part in the development of each. He was a member of Lord Rayleigh's Committee, and in connexion with the maintenance of standards invited representatives of the Reichsanstalt, the Laboratoire Centrale d'Électricité, and the National Physical Laboratory to meet at the Bureau of Standards in 1910 and complete the work, left incomplete in 1908, of preparing specifications for the standards. The representatives (Dr. E. B. Rosa and Dr. Wolff, Dr. W. Jaeger, Prof. F. Laporte, and Mr. F. E. Smith) met at Washington and worked together during a large part of 1910; their report, "On the Concrete Standards of the International Electrical Units", was issued in January 1912 and has formed up to the present the basis of international co-operation. Dr. Stratton undertook the duties of treasurer of Lord Rayleigh's Committee and collected funds to meet the cost of this joint investigation from certain American societies interested in electrical matters.

The establishment of a Permanent International Electrical Commission was a more difficult matter. The International Conference of Weights and Measures was established to give effect to the resolutions adopted in 1875 by the Metric Convention. The Conference dealt solely with standards of length and mass. To these had been added, as a necessary outcome of accurate measurements of length and mass, the standardisation of a limited range of temperature. A committee of the Conference guided the work of the Bureau International des Poids et Mesures at Sèvres, and Stratton had been a member of this committee since 1905. He believed that the enlargement of the functions of the Conference offered the best solution of the problem of establishing an International Electrical Commission.

After his retirement from South Africa, Sir David Gill became the British representative on the Conference of Weights and Measures, and Stratton found in him a congenial colleague and a cordial supporter, but 1914 prevented the immediate realisation of his ideas. This, however, was achieved, not entirely in the manner originally suggested, in 1927, when the Committee of Weights and Measures adopted the following resolution, ratified later by the Conference: "The International Committee of Weights and Measures approves the organisation of a Consultative Committee for Electricity to advise the International Committee of Weights and Measures on questions relating to systems of Measurement and Electrical Standards". That Committee is now in being and has already done valuable work; the International Committee of Weights and Measures

has become the central organisation for the issue of electrical standards. For this purpose it works in close co-operation with the national standardising laboratories, and the standards it proposes to issue will be based on the comparison and co-ordination of the results of these laboratories. At the meeting of the Conference held during the current year, at which Dr. Stratton was present, photometric standards were brought within the ambit of the Committee.

International standardisation did not by any means include the whole of Stratton's work. Since the War, standardisation has been much to the fore in the United States as elsewhere, and Stratton has been a leader on many of the committees dealing with engineering matters. He was a member of the National Screw Thread Commission, and all who have had occasion to study the report of that Commission have appreciated the thoroughness with which its work was done and the value of its results. Stratton was himself a very skilful mechanic. He also served on the National Research Council and on the Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, which under the guidance of Dr. Ames has done much to secure to America a leading place in the scientific study of aviation problems.

Stratton's friends in England welcomed him recently as a delegate to the British Association, Faraday, and Clerk Maxwell centenary meetings in London and Cambridge. These he enjoyed greatly. We met at the National Physical Laboratory and discussed old times, and again at Cambridge, by chance in a bookshop where he was collecting literature relating to Maxwell, as well as during the meetings themselves. He was a guest at Caius College, much impressed by the advantages of college life and the kind hospitality of his hosts.

The end came on Oct. 19, soon after his return to Boston—"No warning, not a moment's illness—just fell forward while talking, that's all" are the words of a letter telling me about it.

R. T. GLAZEBROOK.

MR. ELSDON BEST.

ELSDON BEST, doyen of Polynesian ethnology, died at Wellington, New Zealand, last September. He was born in 1856 at Porirua and had little schooling, but was from his earliest years associated with the Maori population. At eighteen years of age he was in the Poverty Bay district, then emerging from the shadow of Te Kooti's massacres, working in the bush on fencing and felling contracts. He joined the armed constabulary for the, as it turned out, bloodless campaign against Te Whiti, the latter part of his service being in control of a party of 'friendlies' in the bush. In 1883 he went to Honolulu, later moving on to California, engaging in timber work among the redwoods of the Sierra Nevada. He then moved east into Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Louisiana, working as a cowboy and as foreman in railroad construction. At the end of 1886 he returned to New Zealand and entered on the period of twenty-five years' intimate connexion with the Maoris which furnished him

with the material for his long series of books and bulletins. The latter part of his life was spent in Wellington, on the staff of the Dominion Museum.

Varied experience among men gave Elsdon Best ease of manner, and this, coupled with unusual natural gifts—sound judgment, clarity of thought, and quick decision—left a deep impression on all who met him. He was a master of direct English and had great linguistic abilities, best seen in his mastery of the Maori language, which he spoke in later years more accurately than any living Maori. To this was added the gift of thinking like a Maori. His achievement lay especially in accurately recording difficult data.

In the opinion of the late W. H. R. Rivers, Best was the greatest of all ethnological field workers who have worked in the Pacific. He changed the whole face of Maori ethnology, incorporating in his publications all old data of any value and placing on record a mass of his own data far surpassing, both in quantity and quality, all that had been recorded before him. By his death New Zealand has lost one of the first intellects among her native born.

H. D. SKINNER.

MR. HENRY GARNETT.

MR. HENRY GARNETT, for many years director of Messrs. Flatters and Garnett, Ltd., opticians and scientific instrument makers of Manchester, died on Nov. 3, aged sixty-three years. Henry Garnett was born in Waterford, Ireland, in 1868, where his father was head of Newtown School (of the Society of Friends). There he formed a close friendship with the naturalist J. H. Salter (afterwards professor of botany at Aberystwyth). He was apprenticed to a chemist in Evesham, and during his scant leisure

collected a herbarium which was awarded the Bronze Medal of the Pharmaceutical Society. Later he won the Bell Scholarship, and after passing the minor and major (1890) examinations, he secured three silver medals and the Pereira Medal. He worked out, under the direction of Prof. Dunster, the active principles of *Piper ovatum*, and some years later, with Mr. J. Grier, conducted a research into the active principle of ginger, contributing papers to the Pharmaceutical Conference in 1907. Mr. Garnett was keenly interested in birds and plants, and at the time of his death was vice-president of the Manchester Microscopical Society.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:—

Major-General Sir David Bruce, K.C.B., F.R.S., president of the British Association at the meeting at Toronto in 1924, who was a pioneer in the study of tropical medicine, on Nov. 27, aged seventy-six years.

Mr. James H. Dellbridge, who was second engineer in Capt. Scott's first Antarctic Expedition, on Nov. 12, aged fifty-nine years.

Prof. W. A. S. Hewins, first director of the London School of Economics, formerly Tooke professor of economic science and statistics at King's College, London, and formerly Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, on Nov. 16, aged sixty-six years.

Sir Thomas E. Hill, O.B.E., lately medical officer of health for the County of Durham and formerly professor of public health in the University of Durham, on Nov. 25, aged sixty-six years.

Mr. W. F. Reid, an original member of the Society of Chemical Industry and former president of the Society, known for his work on smokeless powder, on Nov. 18, at an advanced age.

News and Views.

THE Savilian professorship of astronomy at Oxford, to which Prof. H. H. Plaskett, professor of astrophysics at Harvard University, has recently been appointed, is the oldest chair of astronomy in Great Britain, with the exception of that at Gresham College, London. Like the Savilian professorship of geometry, it was founded in 1619 by Sir Henry Savile (1549–1622), the Elizabethan scholar, provost of Eton, and warden of Merton College, Oxford. John Bainbridge became the first occupant of the chair, Henry Briggs being his colleague in the chair of geometry. Briggs died in 1631 and Bainbridge in 1643, and both were buried in the choir of Merton College Chapel close to the memorial to Sir Henry Savile. During the renovation of the chapel, a good many years ago, the tombstone of Briggs and the memorials to Savile and Bainbridge were removed to the west end of the chapel, where they are to be seen to-day. The immediate successor of Bainbridge was John Greaves, who measured the pyramids; he was deprived of his chair by Parliament in 1648. The chair then passed to Seth Ward, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury, while among his successors have been Wren (1661–1673),

David Gregory (1691–1708), Bradley (1721–1762), Thomas Hornsby (1763–1810), Rigaud (1827–1839), W. F. Donkin (1842–1869), Charles Pritchard (1870–1893), and the late Prof. H. H. Turner, who held the chair from 1893 until his death last year.

It is announced in the *Times* that on Nov. 26, at the University of Coimbra, a room was dedicated to the memory of Sir Isaac Newton. At the invitation of the Rector, Dr. João Duarte de Oliveira, the British Ambassador to Portugal presided over the ceremony, and the opening speech was delivered by Sir Frank Dyson, the Astronomer Royal. Afterwards addresses were delivered on Newton's mathematics, physics, and philosophy, and on the law of gravitation; and the Ambassador then unveiled a bronze name-plate in the Sala de Newton in the observatory. Coimbra, once the capital of Portugal, is picturesquely situated on a hill on the bank of the river Mondego. The earliest certain information of a university in Portugal dates from 1288, but it was three years later that a "Studium Generale" was founded at Lisbon. That city not proving suitable,