

heaters and superheaters for boilers. For twenty-one years he was a member of council of the Liverpool Engineering Society, and for a time served as president to the Society. He served also as chairman of the North-Western Branch of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers and as a member of its Council.

Watkinson will long be remembered for the kindness of his disposition and for the ceaseless efforts which he made to further the welfare of his School and the interests of his pupils.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Dr. W. D. Dye, F.R.S., principal assistant in the Electrical Standards Department of the

National Physical Laboratory, on Feb. 18, aged forty-four years.

Dr. James Mercer, F.R.S., fellow and lecturer in mathematics at Christ's College, Cambridge, on Feb. 21, aged forty-nine years.

Sir William Somerville, K.B.E., honorary fellow of St. John's College, Oxford, and emeritus professor of rural economy in the University of Oxford, on Feb. 17, aged seventy-one years.

Prof. J. A. Udden, director of the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology, known for his work in the development of the mineral resources of Texas, on Jan. 5, aged seventy-three years.

Prof. Ernest Wilson, emeritus professor of electrical engineering at King's College, London, on Feb. 17, aged sixty-eight years.

News and Views

Centenary of Jean François Champollion

ON March 4 occurs the centenary of the death of Jean François Champollion, the distinguished French Egyptologist, who first deciphered the hieroglyphics. Born on Dec. 23, 1790, at Figeac, in the Department of Lot, he was the younger brother of Jean Jacques Champollion-Figeac (1788-1867), the archaeologist and librarian. He was sent by his brother to school at Grenoble, and while there came under the influence of the mathematician Fourier, who had accompanied Napoleon to Egypt, and it is said that the sight of some Egyptian figures first aroused Champollion's intense interest in the East. From Grenoble he went to Paris to study Arabic and Coptic, at nineteen years of age he returned to Grenoble as a professor of history, and in 1811-14 published his work "L'Égypte sous les Pharaons", covering the whole history and geography of ancient Egypt. He was afterwards robbed of his chair for a time for political reasons, but, continuing his researches, in 1822 he wrote his important memoir on the hieroglyphics, which was read to the Institute, and two years later he was enabled by Louis XVIII. to visit Italy to study the collections of Egyptian antiquities. His "Précis du système hiéroglyphique" appeared in 1824, his catalogue of Egyptian manuscripts in the Vatican in 1826, and his account of the discovery of the hieroglyphic alphabet in 1827. The following year, with some assistants, he made an expedition to Egypt itself, and on his return in 1830 was appointed to a newly founded chair of Egyptology in the Collège de France. His death took place at the early age of forty-one years on March 4, 1832, and he was buried close to Fourier in the Père Lachaise cemetery.

New Physics Building at Leeds

THE new physics building of the University of Leeds, described in NATURE of Jan. 9, p. 64, was formally opened by Sir William Bragg on Feb. 18. In introducing Sir William, the vice-chancellor of the University, Sir J. B. Baillie, referred to the brilliant work carried out by Sir William Bragg during his tenure of the Cavendish chair of physics at Leeds. He also

stated that although the greater part of the £60,000 spent on the laboratory was generously contributed by the public to the general building fund, two specially generous donors specifically earmarked their gifts for physics—Sir James Roberts and Messrs. Courtaulds. Sir William Bragg, in his address, discussed the change of attitude on the part of the general public during the past eighty years or so towards the work of the physical laboratory. There has been increased interest in the progress of natural knowledge and also in its application to everyday needs. At one time private benefactors alone founded and maintained learned institutions; nowadays, such institutions receive public grants. John Citizen has realised the value of the advance of knowledge by experiment, and is willing to pay for it. Sir William would now like to see him in the laboratory itself, and suggested that every opportunity should be taken "to demonstrate visually to John Citizen the slow unfolding of Nature's laws by patient research, the discovery of unsuspected beauties of order and adaptation, the origin of the new conception of the universe, and, not least, the skilful handling of new knowledge for the service and delight of man". Prof. R. Whiddington, in moving a vote of thanks to Sir William Bragg, said he felt sure the new building would for a long time function efficiently and, by virtue of its internal conveniences and appearance, induce the right atmosphere for teaching and research. He felt one regret in leaving the old building to its fate: there was a hallowed corner where his famous predecessor, Sir William Bragg, had made historic experiments—this place would soon be covered by the Brotherton Library. He felt sure that it would be possible to mark the spot suitably when the library is built.

Presentation to Prof. W. W. Watts, F.R.S.

ON Feb. 3, a representative gathering of past and present members of staff of the Geological Department of the Imperial College of Science met for the purpose of presenting Prof. W. W. Watts with his portrait, painted by Sir William Rothenstein. A medal, to be known as the Watts Medal, was also struck as an additional mark of the occasion. This