

News and Views

Sir Frank Dyson, K.B.E., F.R.S.

A LARGE gathering, representative of the Admiralty, the Board of Visitors to the Royal Observatory, the staff of the Observatory, the Royal Astronomical Society and the British Astronomical Association, attended a complimentary luncheon to Sir Frank and Lady Dyson on March 10. Affection and respect for the human and lovable chief of astronomy, and for his attainments and achievements, were the note of the letters read from those unable to be present and of the speeches of Prof. F. J. M. Stratton and Dr. W. A. Parr, the presidents respectively of the Royal Astronomical Society and the British Astronomical Association. Tributes were paid to the unselfish yet competent manner in which Sir Frank Dyson has sunk himself in the work of the Royal Observatory during his tenure of the office of Astronomer Royal and to the friendly and helpful way in which he has co-operated with his astronomical colleagues, professional and amateur alike. The best of wishes for the future were expressed to both Sir Frank and Lady Dyson.

Prof. J. Proudman, F.R.S.

PROF. J. PROUDMAN, the present holder of the chair of applied mathematics in the University of Liverpool, has been elected to the chair of oceanography in the University which has become vacant by the death of Prof. James Johnstone. Prof. Proudman joined the staff of the University in 1913 as lecturer in mathematics, and has held the chair of applied mathematics since 1919. In 1919 he was appointed director of the newly founded Tidal Institute and director of Liverpool Observatory. He is a member of the British National Committee for Geodesy and Geophysics and of its sub-committee for Physical Oceanography. He is also a member of the British Section of the International Committee on the Oceanography of the Pacific. He has served on many committees concerned with tidal matters and inundations. His own researches have mainly been concerned with the dynamical aspects of ocean tides and their currents and with the action of wind and of variable atmospheric pressure upon the sea. For his work on these subjects Prof. Proudman was awarded a Smith's Prize of the University of Cambridge in 1915 and the Adams Prize in 1923.

The Californian Earthquake

THE earthquake that occurred in southern California at 5.54 p.m. on March 10 (1.54 a.m., March 11, G.M.T.), though it was the cause of considerable loss of life and property, can scarcely be regarded as one of the great earthquakes of that State. The number of persons known to have lost their lives is 151, and it is estimated that 7,500 houses were destroyed or damaged, and that the value of the property lost was more than ten million pounds. Most of the places in which houses were injured lie within an area about sixty miles long, running in a south-easterly direction from near Los Angeles to beyond Santa Ana. The

place that suffered most is Long Beach, a town on the coast about twenty miles south of Los Angeles. Here, 65 persons were killed and about a hundred wounded. The epicentre thus lies near the coast, possibly under the ocean, so that the earthquake cannot be connected with the great San Andreas rift, which, in this part of California, runs about fifty miles inland. Since 1769, the Los Angeles district has frequently been visited by severe, though not disastrous, earthquakes. About ninety miles to the west lies Santa Barbara, part of which was seriously damaged by the earthquake of June 29, 1925.

Soviet Expedition to the Pacific Ocean

THE expedition to the Pacific Ocean organised under the joint auspices of the State Hydrological Institute and the Ichthyological Institute of the U.S.S.R. has recently returned from the Far East. The expedition made a detailed investigation of the Sea of Japan, the Sea of Okhotsk and the Bering Sea, in which thirty-one members of the Hydrological Institute took part. In the Sea of Japan a thorough investigation was made of the region stretching from the border of Korea to the Gulf of Oita. For the first time in the history of oceanographic research, detailed work was carried out in the parts adjoining the Gulf of Peter the Great at a depth of 8,500 m., and at that depth various organic forms of life hitherto unknown to science were discovered. It has been ascertained that the sharp descent of the coast-line—at an angle of 24°—forms a huge ravine overgrown with tree-shaped corals. One such coral was extracted by the expedition. Samples of the sea-bed at a depth of 8,400 m. have been obtained, and also much hydrological material which makes it possible to determine, according to the seasons, the annual hydrological system of the region of the Gulf of Peter the Great.

CERTAIN inaccuracies of existing maps have been corrected. In some places the depth was found to be 1,000–1,500 m. instead of 100 m.; elsewhere, on the contrary, submarine ridges have been discovered in place of depressions. Much material on hydrology has been collected which point to the penetration of the waters of the Pacific Ocean to the eastern part of the Sea of Okhotsk. In the Bering Sea, hydrological and biological investigations were made, in some places at a depth of 3,800 m. For the first time, the interchange of the water masses of the Bering and Chukhodsk Seas during the summer season was investigated. Numerous measurements were made by the expedition which will enable a more exact map to be made of the western part of the Bering Sea.

Metallurgy Building at University College, Cardiff

IN NATURE of August 5, 1915, an account was given of the new building which had been erected for metallurgy at University College, Cardiff. An