

together with his great energy, which enabled him to accomplish so much in so short a time. He was a strong stimulus to his colleagues, and an interesting companion in other ways than merely scientific. With all his gifts and promise, he would undoubtedly have made a great name for himself in science, had not his life been cut short so early.

DR. W. C. VAN DER STERR

WE regret to announce the death, which occurred at Amsterdam on May 17, of Dr. W. C. van der Sterr. By his death the Union of South Africa has lost a prominent man of science. W. C. van der Sterr was born in Holland in 1867 and at about twenty-five years of age migrated to South Africa. His earliest work was in the Transvaal, where he and his partner, Mr. E. W. Ferguson, as private surveyors, were assigned by Government the establishment of the triangulation of control of the city of Johannesburg. At the end of the South African War he was largely instrumental in founding the Land Surveyors' Institute of the Transvaal and in starting a valuable journal in connexion with that Institute.

Now a marked man, Dr. van der Sterr was offered an official position in 1919 in the Cape Province and two years later was appointed the director of the Trigonometrical Survey of the whole Union. He thus became South Africa's foremost geodesist, following in the steps of the Abbé Lacaille, Sir Thomas Maclear and, above all, Sir David Gill.

He was successful in initiating the degree of B.Sc. in surveying at the University of Cape Town in 1928, where he was attached as reader in

surveying while he continued to hold his official appointment in the Union. A year earlier the University had conferred on him an honorary D.Sc.

Dr. van der Sterr represented South Africa at various conferences in Europe, and his British colleagues have the pleasantest memories of association with him at these reunions. He set a high standard of accuracy as his ideal and has left to his successors the task of maintaining the geodetic tradition so long current in South Africa.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:—

Dr. E. E. Fournier d'Albe, inventor of the optophone and a pioneer investigator on the properties of selenium, author of a "Life of Sir William Crookes" (1925), on June 29, aged sixty-five years.

Mr. Lucien A. Legros, O.B.E., formerly president of the Institution of Automobile Engineers, known for his publications on type-casting and on traction, on June 16, aged sixty-seven years.

Mr. H. R. A. Mallock, F.R.S., consulting engineer, formerly a member of the Advisory Committee for Aeronautics and consulting engineer of the Ordnance Board, on June 26, aged eighty-two years.

Mr. Ralph Richardson, commissary clerk of Edinburgh and probate registrar for Scotland, formerly president of the Edinburgh Geological Society and secretary of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, on June 26, aged eighty-eight years.

News and Views

Sir Henry Lyons, F.R.S.

WHEN Sir Henry retired from the Survey Department of Egypt and joined the Science Museum in 1912, assuming the directorship in 1920, he found it characteristically free from the conventional ideas of what constitutes a museum. It has been his work to extend still further its range and to adapt it to what are believed to be modern needs. While retaining its original purpose of conserving for the student and historian records of the past and of the existing state of science and engineering, he has succeeded by the provision of introductory exhibits in presenting these records in such a way as to bring them within the ken of the ordinary visitor. Further, by organising a succession of special exhibitions commemorative of scientific men or of notable events; by presenting the results of the latest scientific research in various fields; by affording the public glimpses of what public departments are doing to further the advance of science; by the provision of lectures and of guide lecturers; by temporary exhibition of objects that have received publicity such as the Schneider Cup hydroplane, he has created

widespread interest among all classes of the community, so that the Science Museum always has something fresh for the occasional visitor. So much is this the case that the attendances have gone up from 430,000 in 1925—helped by the opening of the New Building by the King and Queen in 1928—to 1½ million last year. The number of heads counted is perhaps only a rough criterion of usefulness; there is the possible danger, too, of a trade element creeping into the exhibitions, but with the surveillance of the Advisory Council of the Museum, which is broad-based in its constitution, such danger should be remote. Finality is, we hope, not by any means reached and we trust that the new director, Brigadier E. E. B. Mackintosh, will not only maintain but also increase the activities of an institution which is now one of London's attractions.

Honorary Fellows of the Royal Society of Edinburgh

The following elections to honorary fellowships of the Royal Society of Edinburgh were made at the ordinary meeting on July 3: *Foreign Honorary Fellows*: Prof. John J. Abel, professor of pharmaco-