

News and Views

Mme. Joliot-Curie and Scientific Research in France

MME. JOLIOT-CURIE has been appointed Secretary of State for Scientific Research in the new Government just formed in France by M. Blum. Her name will be familiar to scientific readers as that of the daughter of Prof. and Mme. Curie, discoverers of radium, and herself a distinguished worker in the field of artificial radioactivity. M. and Mme. Joliot-Curie have carried out important investigations in various branches of radioactivity which were fittingly crowned by the award to them in 1935 of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. When the discovery was announced of the positive electron, M. and Mme. Joliot-Curie took up the examination of methods by which it could be produced, and found that positive electrons appeared with neutrons during the disintegration of certain light elements by α -rays. It appeared on further investigation that whereas the neutrons were emitted during the α -particle bombardment, the positive electrons were due to an entirely separate process, and continued to appear after the bombardment had ceased. The new process thus recognised was then shown to be due to the presence of unstable isotopes with radioactive properties, a discovery which was immediately found to be of wide importance. The preparation and examination of these radioactive bodies of short life period, by investigators in numerous laboratories, have afforded valuable additions to our knowledge of atomic structure and the mechanism of atomic disintegration.

Dr. C. N. H. Long

DR. C. N. H. LONG, until recently director of the Cox Medical Research Institute in the University of Pennsylvania, has been appointed to the chair of physiological chemistry in Yale University, in succession to the late Prof. L. B. Mendel. This chair was previously held by another famous American physiological chemist, namely, Prof. Chittenden. Dr. Long took a first-class honours degree in chemistry at Manchester in 1921 and then worked in the physiological laboratory there and at University College, London, for a number of years, particularly on matters relating to the physiology and physiological chemistry of muscular activity in man and the higher animals. The work was done on behalf of the Medical Research Council. From University College, he went to McGill University, Montreal, where he was attached to the Medical Unit of Prof. Jonathan Meakins. There he continued his research, and qualified in medicine. From Montreal he went to the Cox Medical Research Institute at Philadelphia, and now he is going to Yale. Dr. Long thus started as a chemist, then became a physiologist, then a professor of research in medicine, and is now going back again to physiological chemistry.

Mr. W. Dallimore

MR. WILLIAM DALLIMORE retired from the post of keeper of the Museums at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, on March 31, having reached the age-limit after more than forty-five years' connexion with Kew. Mr. Dallimore entered Kew as a student gardener in 1891. He was appointed propagator in the Arboretum in 1892 and assistant curator (at that time called foreman) in 1896. In 1908 he was transferred to the Museums as assistant, and became keeper in 1926. Mr. Dallimore's exceptionally wide knowledge of arboriculture has been of great service to Kew, especially in connexion with the planning and administration of the National Pinetum at Bedgebury, which he will continue to supervise during his retirement. Dr. John Hutchinson, botanist in the Herbarium, has been appointed by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries to be keeper of the Museums in succession to Mr. Dallimore.

Bicentenary of Coulomb (1736-1806)

ON June 14 the bicentenary occurs of the birth of Charles-Augustin de Coulomb, the French military engineer and physicist, who is remembered for his work on friction, machines and electricity and magnetism. Born at Angoulême, he was educated in Paris, and entering the corps of military engineers served successively at Martinique, Rochefort, the Isle of Aix, Cherbourg and in Paris. He rose to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, was a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences, and after the Revolution, of the National Institute, and was made a chevalier of the Order of St. Louis and a member of the Legion of Honour. He was intimately acquainted with the civil engineering of his day, and his various memoirs were the result of long and refined experiments combined with mathematical inquiries. He counted many eminent men of science among his contemporaries, such as Laplace, Lavoisier, Lalande, Borda, Messier, Monge, Charles, Berthollet and Mechain, but, wrote Thomas Young, "among all the men of science who have done honour to France, it would be difficult to point out a single individual, who, with regard to the cultivation of terrestrial physics, could at all be put in competition with M. Coulomb". Towards the end of his life, Coulomb suffered much from ill-health, and his death took place on August 23, 1806, when he was seventy years of age.

COULOMB's original investigations fall into two groups, those relating to mechanical subjects and those dealing with electricity and magnetism. It was while he was in Martinique that in 1773 he sent his first paper to the Academy of Sciences. This was on statical problems relating to architecture, and in it he dealt with the strength of blocks of stone, masonry