

News and Views

Retirement of Prof. W. A. Bone, F.R.S.

At the end of the present session, Prof. W. A. Bone vacates, under the age limit, the chair of chemical technology at the Imperial College of Science, which he has held for the past twenty-five years. A graduate of Owens College, Manchester, he studied under Prof. H. B. Dixon and later, when lecturer there in chemistry and metallurgy, he carried out those classical investigations into the slow and explosive combustion of hydrocarbons which have done so much to elucidate the mechanism of their oxidation, and enabled him to formulate the hydroxylation theory. In 1905, he became the first Livesey professor of coal gas and fuel industries in the University of Leeds, and there laid the broad foundations of the new branch of science, fuel technology; there also, in collaboration with McCourt, he invented and developed surface combustion. At South Kensington, Prof. Bone was faced in 1912 with the task of building up a new Department of Chemical Technology, and under his inspiring leadership a research school of world-wide reputation has been created. His field has covered high-pressure explosions and gas reactions, flame spectra, the study by high-speed photography of flame movements in gaseous explosions, the chemical constitution of coal and gas reactions in the blast furnace. At a dinner on June 17, given in honour both of Prof. Bone and Mr. W. C. Hancock who is also retiring from the lecturing staff of the Department, a distinguished gathering including many old colleagues and students assembled, and suitable presentations were made. Fortunately Prof. Bone's retirement does not mean the ending of his scientific activities, for the College authorities, strongly supported by industry and other outside bodies, are providing a new research laboratory in which he will be enabled to pursue those investigations on which he is still actively engaged.

Société de l'Industrie Minérale: Foreign Members

At a general meeting of the Société de l'Industrie Minérale, St. Etienne, held on May 24, it was decided that the Society should, for the first time, elect honorary members, the terms of the modified statute being that "the title of Honorary Member can be given by the General Meeting to persons of foreign nationality who have promoted the mineral industry or the society by their works". The first elections under the new statute are: Sir Robert Hadfield; Dr. C. E. Guillaume, director of the International Bureau of Weights and Measures; Prof. L. Denoël, professor of mining in the University of Liège; and Prof. P. Fourmarier, professor of geology in the University of Liège. The Société de l'Industrie Minérale, which was founded in 1855, is one of the leading associations of French engineers, and has a roll of nearly two thousand members.

Meyer Medal for Plant Introduction

THE Meyer Medal of the American Genetic Association, for distinguished service in plant introduction, was presented on June 13 to Mr. P. H. Dorsett, who for more than forty-five years has been associated with the scientific work of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Mr. Dorsett was instrumental in bringing together the largest collection of soy bean varieties that has ever been made. Two expeditions to China were undertaken to make this collection. On the first trip Mr. Dorsett and his son, the late James Dorsett, collected more than two thousand samples from Nanking and its vicinity. On the second expedition, Mr. Dorsett and Dr. William J. Morse, soy bean expert of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, collected more than six thousand samples which were sent to the United States for test. A total of some two thousand distinct varieties of soy beans was obtained from these samples. These are being tested to determine their value to the American farmer. Some of them are already being widely used. The soy bean is a relatively new plant immigrant in the United States, but in 1935 five and a half million acres were planted with it, and forty million bushels of the dry beans were harvested. Mr. Dorsett also took part in three expeditions to obtain new varieties of plants to Brazil (1913-14) and to the West Indies in 1927-30. He was instrumental in bringing into the U.S. valuable citrus varieties and many rare ornamental plants. The Meyer Medal is awarded at intervals by the Council of the American Genetic Association for distinguished services in plant introduction. It is named in honour of the late Frank Meyer, pioneer plant explorer of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and had its origin in a fund left by Meyer to his fellow workers in plant introduction, who decided to use it for this purpose. Meyer spent the last nine years of his life in plant explorations in China. Among previous recipients is Mr. H. N. Ridley, who was responsible for the introduction of Para rubber into the East Indies.

Newton Manuscripts

AN interesting sale of manuscripts is advertised by Messrs. Sotheby and Co., 34 and 35 New Bond Street, on July 13 and the following day. Readers of NATURE may remember the "Portsmouth Papers", strictly a "Catalogue of the Portsmouth Collection of Books and Papers written by or belonging to Sir Isaac Newton", published by the Cambridge University Press in 1888. The then Earl of Portsmouth presented the scientific part of these papers to the University, and an influential syndicate of the University issued a catalogue of the whole, and took a copy of the more important letters that it did not keep, and returned these to Lord Portsmouth. The Portsmouth family, which has a connexion with