

News and Views

Dr. H. L. Eason, C.B., C.M.G.

DR. HERBERT LIGHTFOOT EASON, who has been appointed principal of the University of London, in succession to the late Sir Edwin Deller, was educated at University College, London, and at Guy's Hospital. He has been superintendent of Guy's Hospital since 1920, having previously held the post of dean of the Medical School from 1904 until 1912. He has been a member of the Senate since 1911 and has been vice-chancellor since 1935. He was chairman of the Library Committee in 1929-33, of the Finance Committee in 1923-25, and of the Academic Council for two periods (1922-23 and 1933-35). He served during the Great War as consulting ophthalmic surgeon to the Forces in the Mediterranean, Egypt and Palestine, was mentioned in dispatches, and was awarded the C.M.G. in 1917 and the C.B. in 1919. He has been the representative of the University on the General Medical Council since 1925, and is now junior treasurer of the Council. From 1924 until 1926 he was a member of the Departmental Committee of the Board of Education on the re-constitution of the University, and from 1925 until 1930 a member of the Departmental Committee of the Ministry of Health on Postgraduate Medical Education.

Prof. J. A. Douglas

DR. J. A. DOUGLAS, of Keble College, for many years senior lecturer and demonstrator in the Department of Geology at Oxford, has been appointed to the chair in succession to the late Prof. W. J. Sollas. The professorship carries with it a fellowship at University College. Prof. Douglas's most important work is his classical contribution to the geology of the Andes. He has also done important work on Persian palaeontology and stratigraphy, especially the Permo-Carboniferous fauna of south-west Persia. He had published many papers on local geology, especially on the cornbrash sequence of the British Isles, and on other subjects. He has served both as secretary and vice-president of the Geological Society. Generations of students of geology at Oxford have known him as a good teacher—both as tutor and lecturer—and an expert in field geology. The appointment is a popular one, and one that augurs well for the future of geology in the University.

The Flooding in East Anglia

ALTHOUGH on a much smaller scale than the tragic experiences along the valleys of the Rivers Ohio and Mississippi in the United States, and happily, so far, unattended by any loss of life, though the damage to property has been considerable, the flooding of the Fen District in East Anglia has been a source of great anxiety and distress to the unfortunate

inhabitants and a matter of grave concern to the responsible authorities. The situation, continuously critical, has changed its aspect but little from day to day during the past week or ten days, except to demonstrate fresh localities of weakness in the overstrained banks of the rivers. Cracks and breaches have occurred at various points and, at the time of writing, some 15,000 acres of good cornland lie under water, while another 150,000-180,000 acres are threatened with a similar fate. The district lies in the South Level area of the Great Ouse Catchment Board, which includes Ely, Soham and Burwell on the east and Earith on the west, forming a basin drained by the Cam, the Lark and the Little Ouse and minor streams. At the moment, the chief source of anxiety is transferred to two main watercourses, the Old and the New Bedford Rivers, artificial channels of the Great Ouse from Earith to the estuary, constructed by Sir Cornelius Vermuyden in the seventeenth century. The two channels run almost parallel about three quarters of a mile apart for a distance of twenty-one miles, and the intervening space, known as the 'Washes', provides a relief for the channels when overcharged, being flooded regularly in the winter and occasionally in the summer months. The two main, or barrier, banks of the enclosure protect the low-lying land on each side, and the maintenance of these banks is a matter of vital importance. The banks are now being taxed to the limit of their resistance.

The Special Areas Act

THE statement relating to the Special Areas, including the memorandum on the financial resolution proposed in the House of Commons on March 8, reviews the work of the Commissioners and the progress in the Areas in public health, social and other services, trading estates, development of industrial and shipping facilities and of the Special Areas Reconstruction Association (Cmd. 5386. London: H.M. Stationery Office). The paper states that the placing of Government orders and the establishment of Government factories in the Special Areas, together with the prospective improvement in the rate position, have prepared the way for a further advance. To assist the introduction into the Areas of new industrial undertakings of the 'light' type and provide more stable, because more diversified, employment, the financial resolution provides the necessary authority for the introduction of a Bill to continue in operation the Special Areas (Development and Improvement) Act after May 31, 1937, to extend the powers of the Commissioners under that Act, and to make new provisions as regards Special Areas and certain other areas to be certified by the Ministry of Labour.