

## News and Views

## Dr. G. S. Whitby

As announced in *NATURE* of November 5, p. 828, Dr. George Stafford Whitby, for the past nine years director of the Division of Chemistry, National Research Council of Canada, has been appointed director of the Chemical Research Laboratory of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, London. In Canada, Dr. Whitby has organized and directed chemical research in many lines, not a few leading to industrial applications and developments. At the age of sixteen years, he entered the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, where he worked under Sir William Tilden. Following graduation, he spent four years on the staff of the Imperial College in teaching and research under Sir Edward Thorpe. He then spent seven years in the East Indies as chief chemist to a group of British, French and Belgian rubber companies. His work there had a marked influence on the development of the rubber industry, and established him as one of the leading rubber chemists of the world. He was appointed assistant professor of organic chemistry in McGill University in 1918, and eventually associate professor and full professor. Dr. Whitby has published seventy-seven scientific papers, chiefly in the realms of organic and colloid chemistry. In 1929, he was selected to take charge of the Division of Chemistry of the National Research Laboratories, Canada. Many of the research programmes initiated by him have yielded results of commercial value, notable examples being the development of refractories, improvement of testing methods and means for the utilization of asbestos, the application of research to the problems of laundering, the development of processes for the utilization of waste natural gas, studies in wool, leather, rubber and other materials of commerce.

## Prof. J. Plotnikow

PROF. J. PLOTNIKOW, director of the Physico-Chemical Institute in the technical faculty of the University of Zagreb (Yugoslavia), will celebrate his sixtieth birthday on December 4. Prof. Plotnikow is very well known for his numerous investigations in photochemistry and photography, and for various books, amongst which may be mentioned "Photochemische Versuchstechnik" (2nd edition, 1928, Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, Leipzig); "Grundriss der Photochemie" (1923, W. de Gruyter, Berlin); "Photochemie für Mediziner" (1928, G. Thieme, Leipzig); and "Lehrbuch der allgemeinen Photochemie" (2nd edition, 1936, W. de Gruyter, Berlin). He was born at Tambow, Russia, was a student of physics and mathematics at the University of Moscow until 1901, and from 1901 until 1908 worked

in Ostwald's Institute at Leipzig, in which he was appointed assistant in 1906. Returning to Moscow, he became professor in 1916, but lost his position, his property, and very nearly his life in the Russian revolution. After a year as director of the scientific laboratory of the "Agfa" Company (Berlin), he became in 1920 a professor at Zagreb. For his discovery of 'infra-red shadow photography' he received the 'Goldene Verdienstmedaille' of the Vienna Photographic Society.

## Prof. A. Sommerfeld

PROF. ARNOLD SOMMERFELD, professor of theoretical physics in the University of Munich, will celebrate his seventieth birthday on December 5. He is able to look back on a long and successful career in mathematical physics, both in research and in teaching. During the time of his tenure of the chair in Munich, where he succeeded Boltzmann in 1905, his modest institute became the centre for students of physical theory, many of whom went there from abroad for a period under his inspired guidance. Among his numerous pupils who now occupy high positions in the academic world, Debye, Pauli and Heisenberg may be mentioned.

## Social and International Relations of Science

THE British Association has now constituted a committee to work the Division for the Social and International Relations of Science which was established at the recent meeting of the Association in Cambridge. The committee, under the chairmanship of Sir Richard Gregory, includes the president and general officers of the Association *ex-officio*, Sir Daniel Hall, Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins, Sir John Russell, and Lord Stamp as vice-chairmen, and as other members: Prof. F. C. Bartlett, Prof. J. D. Bernal, Prof. P. M. S. Blackett, Mr. Ritchie Calder, Mr. A. M. Carr-Saunders, Prof. S. Chapman, Dr. C. H. Desch, Prof. A. C. G. Egerton, Prof. H. J. Fleure, Mr. E. W. Gilbert, Prof. N. F. Hall, Mr. R. F. Harrod, Prof. A. V. Hill, Sir Clement Hindley, Prof. L. Hogben, Dr. L. E. C. Hughes, Dr. J. S. Huxley, Mr. D. Caradog Jones, Prof. H. Levy, Dr. C. S. Myers, Mr. Max Nicholson, Sir John Orr, Prof. J. C. Philip, Prof. J. G. Smith, Prof. R. G. Stapledon, Prof. F. J. M. Stratton, Prof. F. E. Weiss, Mr. H. G. Wells, Mr. J. S. Wilson, Dr. S. Zuckerman. The main purposes of the Division are stated to be "the objective study of the effects of advances in science on communities, and reciprocally the effects of social conditions upon the progress of science; and the encouragement of the application of science to promote the well-being of society".