

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".

THE committee is empowered to arrange meetings of the Division, to co-ordinate work dealing with the social relations of science, both at home and abroad, to be prepared to act in a consultative capacity and to supply information to organizations, individuals, and the public, to initiate and carry out inquiries and research, and to secure their publication. An executive sub-committee has prepared an extensive programme of work for the full committee, which, at a meeting on November 28, appointed a number of other sub-committees to deal with specific matters. These include such topics as the economic requirements of nations, the influence of scientific and technical developments on the relative importance of different industries and on the total volume of employment, the question of supplementing existing national research organizations whether in normal circumstances or at time of emergency, and the co-ordination and subsequent public presentation of work on nutrition and agriculture. Contact has already been established with organizations at work on such subjects as a survey of research in Great Britain, the prospective effects of changes in the population structure on economics, society, and occupations, and the incidence of taxation on scientific research. It is hoped to co-operate with the International Council of Scientific Unions, which has already set up a Committee on Science and its Social Relations with the view of preparing a report of world-wide scope.

Jundhi Shapur

AT a meeting of the Section of the History of Medicine of the Royal Society of Medicine on November 2, Dr. Cyril Elgood gave an interesting account of Jundhi Shapur, which was famous as the site of a university in south-west Persia, probably founded about A.D. 340. The Arab invasion of Persia took place when Jundhi Shapur was at the height of its fame. The city surrendered in A.D. 636, but was left undisturbed, and the University remained the greatest centre of medical learning in the Islamic world until the foundation of the school of medicine in Bagdad. The system of medicine taught at Jundhi Shapur was predominantly Greek, but indigenous medicine, Indian medicine, and possibly Chinese medicine were also studied there. The teachers of Hippocratic medicine were reinforced by the exodus of the Nestorian professors from Edessa in 489 and of the Neo-Platonists from Athens in 529. There was also a constant flow of individual Greek physicians to the Persian royal service. The importance of Jundhi Shapur lay in its being a store-house of Greek tradition when Rome was no longer the capital of the Empire and when Constantinople was more interested in theology than in science. It was the cradle of the great Arabian school of medicine and provided most of the translators who rescued Greek texts from oblivion, thus forming the source of the renaissance of medicine in Europe. Owing, however, to the constant transfer of physicians to Bagdad, the school of Jundhi Shapur declined, and by the twelfth century ceased to function.

Awards of the Mary Kingsley Medal

PRESENTATIONS of the Mary Kingsley Medal to five recipients were made on November 23 at a reception at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine by its chairman, Viscount Leverhulme. This medal, struck in commemoration of the late Miss Mary Kingsley, niece of Charles Kingsley, distinguished for her work in promoting the welfare of the natives of West Africa, is awarded in recognition of services in the cause of fighting and preventing disease in the tropics. After the chairman had welcomed the guests, Prof. Warrington Yorke introduced the recipients of the medals, briefly outlining the grounds for the awards. They were: Lady Danson, honorary recipient, widow of the late Sir Francis Danson, who was Chairman of the Liverpool School over a lengthy period, and was largely responsible for the establishment of the School's research laboratory at Freetown, West Africa, and herself undertaking the duties of chairman during her husband's absences; Dr. Marshall A. Barber, with a long and distinguished association with the International Health Division of the Rockefeller Foundation, and recognized for his researches on malaria and for his work on the hook-worm, and inventor of the 'micromanipulator'; Prof. Emile Brumpt, of the University of Paris, distinguished for his researches on tropical parasitology; Prof. W. Scott Patton, emeritus professor of entomology in the School, formerly in the Indian Medical Service and director of the King Institute, Madras, well known for his researches on kala-azar and oriental sore, and finally Werner Schuleman, professor of pharmacology, University of Bonn, the discoverer of the anti-malarial drug, plasmoquine, which gave a great impetus to chemotherapy.

Early Anatolian Civilizations

MISS WINIFRED LAMB'S account of her third season of excavation at Kusuru, south-west of Afyon Karahissar in Anatolia, which was given before the Society of Antiquaries of London on November 17, emphasized the importance of this little-explored region for knowledge of the cultural distributions of Asia Minor in the third millennium B.C. Miss Lamb was able to demonstrate that at this early period the distinction which has been drawn between the cultures of eastern and western Anatolia is by no means so clearly defined as has been thought. The culture of the community of Kusuru in the third millennium, she finds, had much in common with that of the western Anatolian group; and she would regard the two, not indeed as dissociated, but rather as independent developments of the culture of peoples of a common stock. A relatively advanced stage of civic development is indicated by the disposition of the houses on either side of a street. These architectural remains are well preserved, and in some instances still rise to a height of more than three metres. A period of disturbances and the partial destruction of the settlement at about 2000 B.C. was followed by the appearance of a new race. The town was rebuilt and its citadel enclosed by a double wall with a gateway on the west. On the evidence of the pottery, implements and cult objects,