

News and Views

Sir Ambrose Fleming, F.R.S.

At the meeting of the Physical Society held at the Imperial College on January 13, Sir Ambrose Fleming delivered an address on "Physics and Physicists of the Eighteen-Seventies", the substance of which appears elsewhere in this issue (p. 99). At the time of the jubilee of the Society in 1924, five of the ninety-nine original fellows were living; now, in his ninetieth year, and enjoying remarkably good health, Sir Ambrose is the sole survivor. Mr. O. J. (now Sir Oliver) Lodge became a fellow in 1875, the year after the foundation of the Society, and was its president from 1889 until 1901. At the inaugural meeting of the Society, the first paper "On the New Contact Theory of the Galvanic Cell" was read by Mr. J. A. Fleming at the invitation of the founder, Prof. Frederick Guthrie. That paper will be reprinted in the Society's *Proceedings*, together with the address he has now delivered after an interval of nearly sixty-five years. This is an event that must surely be unique in the history of learned societies. In addition to his many other honours, Sir Ambrose received the Duddell Medal of the Physical Society in 1930.

M. Bernard Lyot

THE Gold Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society has been awarded to M. Bernard Lyot, of the Meudon Observatory, France, for his observations and photography of the solar corona in the absence of a total eclipse. In 1868, Lockyer and Janssen showed that prominences could be observed when the sun was not eclipsed. In 1882, Huggins attempted the more difficult problem of observing the corona without an eclipse, and both Hale and Deslandres in 1893 designed apparatus for the chromatic isolation of the green line. These efforts were entirely unsuccessful. M. Lyot went much more thoroughly into the optical conditions necessary to eliminate the diffused sunlight. The light of the sun is a million times that of the corona, and at Meudon the scattered sunlight at 1' from the sun's limb cannot be reduced to less than twenty or thirty times that of the corona, but on the Pic du Midi, after a fall of snow, the stray light on occasions is not of greater intensity than the light of the corona at 1' from the limb. But a very large amount of stray light is incidental in the optical systems usually employed, which M. Lyot has analysed into diffraction round the edge of the objective lens, scratches and bubbles on the lens, and reflected light from the back of the lens. By arranging screens to cut off the light from these several sources, he has succeeded in photographing the inner corona, obtaining a spectroheliogram in light 5303 Å., and measuring the polarization all around the limb; in addition, he has obtained accurate wave-lengths of a number of the emission lines of the corona, as well as the width of the lines.

Prof. H. H. Read

PROF. H. H. READ, who has just succeeded Prof. P. G. H. Boswell in the chair of geology at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, received his early training in the Royal College of Science under Prof. W. W. Watts. He was appointed to the Scottish branch of H.M. Geological Survey in 1914, but his career was almost immediately interrupted by the outbreak of the Great War. During 1914-17, he was absent on military service in Egypt, Gallipoli and France. In 1917 he was invalided out of the army and resumed work in Scotland, where he remained until 1931. During this period, Dr. Read spent much time in surveying in the central and northern Highlands, and in Shetland, and as a result developed a special interest in igneous and metamorphic geology. In 1929-30, he served as president of the Edinburgh Geological Society. In 1931, he resigned from the Geological Survey on appointment as George Herdman professor of geology in the University of Liverpool. During the last twenty years, Prof. Read has published a number of important papers, mainly on problems connected with the igneous and metamorphic geology of the north of Scotland and Shetland; and in 1935 he was awarded the Bigsby Medal of the Geological Society of London for these researches. He has been chosen as president of Section C (Geology) for the meeting of the British Association in Dundee this year, an appointment which is peculiarly appropriate, in view of his interest in Scottish geology.

Dr. R. L. Smith-Rose

THE Radio Department of the National Physical Laboratory is, as were the two organizations by the fusion of which it was formed in 1933, occupied almost wholly on work within the programme of the Radio Research Board, and Dr. R. L. Smith-Rose, whose appointment as superintendent of the Department was announced in these columns last week, has been associated with the work of the Board from its formation. Dr. Smith-Rose, who was born in 1894, studied at the Imperial College of Science and has, alone and in collaboration with departmental colleagues, published an impressive array of important papers, some seventy in number, on radio direction-finding, the propagation and attenuation of radio waves, the properties of ultra-short waves, the screening of radio circuits and the measurement of radio field-intensity. His principal work has been in the laying of the scientific foundations of radio direction-finding, alike as an aid to navigation by sea and air and as an essential element in studying the properties and propagation of radio waves in general. From the first adequate survey of the accuracy of closed-coil direction-finding, when the