

Dr. C. H. O'Donoghue

DR. C. H. O'DONOGHUE has been appointed to the chair of zoology in the University of Reading in succession to Prof. F. J. Cole (see NATURE of March 4, p. 368). After graduating with first-class honours in zoology and physiology from King's College, London, he was appointed lecturer in zoology at University College. He obtained the D.Sc. degree in 1912, was awarded a Beit Memorial Scholarship for research and spent six months studying at Freiburg under Prof. F. Doflein. In 1918 he went to Canada as professor of zoology in the University of Manitoba, and in 1923 acted as director of the Marine Biological Station at Nanaimo, Vancouver Island. For two terms he was visiting professor at Stanford University, California. He was also appointed by the Canadian Government for two years as head of a scientific expedition to Jasper Park in the Rocky Mountains. As a member of the Research Committee of the Biological Board of Canada, he helped to establish the Prince Rupert and Cultus Lake Stations. In 1927 he returned to Great Britain at the invitation of the late Prof. J. H. Ashworth, to become senior lecturer and later reader in zoology in the University of Edinburgh. In 1932 he was awarded the Neill Prize of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and he was president of the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh in 1933. His research covers a wide field, but is chiefly concerned with the taxonomy of the Bryozoa and Nudibranchia, and with vertebrate anatomy, physiology and embryology.

Prof. M. Leclerc du Sablon

CONGRATULATIONS are to be extended to Prof. Mathieu Leclerc du Sablon, who attains his eightieth birthday on March 25. Prof. Leclerc du Sablon is probably the last living member of the famous group of French botanists who at the end of the nineteenth century made very important contributions to the study of plant anatomy. From 1883 until 1890 he was working in Paris at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, and later at the Natural History Museum under Van Tieghem, his father-in-law and teacher. During this period he produced a series of important papers on various subjects in some of which are facts now taught to every student of elementary botany. His studies on the dehiscence mechanisms of anthers in the flowering plants and of the sporangia in the Archegoniatae are especially noteworthy; he was the first to discover the mechanism of the annulus in the fern sporangium. Other important contributions were papers on the structure and physiology of tendrils, on the haustoria of parasitic flowering plants, on the development and comparative structure of the sporophytes of Liverworts, and on the development of the vascular system in young fern plants. In 1890 he was appointed professor of botany in the University of Toulouse, a post which he held for thirty years. His extensive knowledge of plants found expression in the "Cours de Botanique", a large text-book written in collaboration with Gaston Bonnier, his brother-in-law and former colleague. The first part of this work appeared in 1901; but it

was not completed until 1933 when, after the death of Bonnier, the last part dealing with plant physiology was published. His activities have covered an exceptionally wide field, and his influence on the development of botany, especially in France, has been very considerable.

Archæological Studies in France

PROF. H. V. VALLOIS, professor in the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Toulouse, has been appointed professor of prehistoric anthropology in the Institut de Paléontologie humaine of the University of Paris. Prof. Vallois, who has long been recognized as standing in the front rank of authorities in France on human palæontology, has been in charge of the anthropological laboratory for practical studies of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes in Paris since 1937, and is senior editor of the periodical *L'Anthropologie*. He took up his duties at the Institut at the beginning of the current semester, and is delivering a course of lectures on the general principles of human palæontology and the prehomínids. A course of lectures on prehistoric ethnography is also being delivered concurrently by the Abbé Breuil. A new department has been formed in the Ecole des Hautes Etudes for the study of geology with special reference to the origin of man. The first director of the department will be P. Teilhard de Chardin, who during his prolonged residence in the Far East has made numerous and important contributions to the study of the palæontology and pre-history of China and south-eastern Asia. It will be remembered that the first discovery of palæolithic implements in China was due to Teilhard de Chardin, while his studies of the fossil fauna of Choukoutien is the basis for the dating of Peking man. He contributes to the current issue of *L'Anthropologie* (48, 5-6; 1938) notes on the human palæontology of southern Asia, summarizing the results of his observations in Burma, Malaya, Java and Indo-China, when accompanying Dr. Hellmut de Terra on his recent geological and archæological survey in the Far East, supplementary to his investigations in India (see NATURE, 143, 275; 1938).

German Activities in Central Europe

DURING the past fortnight, the State of Czechoslovakia has been forcibly broken up and a large part absorbed into the "Great German Reich" as the "Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia". In the account of Czechoslovakia's contributions to science which appeared in NATURE of November 26, 1938, pp. 942-44, the hope was expressed that the scientific and cultural development of the Czechs would still be possible after their territory had been drastically curtailed by the Munich Agreement, and that they would continue to make contributions to the advancement of scientific knowledge and take a share in its application to the welfare of mankind. This hope was qualified by the anxiety then felt for those men of science and learning whom the impoverished State might not be able to support, and it is gratifying to know that, until recently, indeed

until the very end, the educational authorities succeeded in maintaining practically all the important research institutions and cultural associations remaining within the country. Scientific publications also continued to appear, and there was every reason to believe that the nation would, by hard labour, maintain its vigour and prosperity, and its men of science would be able to continue to achieve distinction and add to the sum of human knowledge by meritorious work in their respective fields. It is, perhaps, too early to foresee the consequences of the latest events in Central Europe. The new Protectorate is avowedly to have a measure of autonomy, though this is scarcely likely to go so far as to permit the free and open interchange of thought which has been banned in Germany for the past few years.

Tuberculosis in Wales

THE report is published of a Committee, consisting of Mr. Clement Davies and Dr. F. J. H. Coutts, appointed by Sir Kingsley Wood, when Minister of Health, in response to a request of the King Edward VII Welsh National Memorial Association for an inquiry into the anti-tuberculosis service in Wales and Monmouthshire (London: H.M. Stationery Office. 4s. 6d. net). The problem of tuberculosis is relatively more serious in Wales than in England, for the mortality rate has not declined so rapidly as, and exceeds, that of England. Excessive mortality in Wales occurs among young adults aged fifteen to twenty-five years and in the age group twenty-five to forty-five. In contrast with England, the rates at fifteen to twenty-five show little change since 1921 and the rate for females is distressingly high. Certain areas, notably Anglesey, Caernarvon and Merioneth, are especially afflicted with the disease. The report states, that for practical purposes, racial susceptibility as a factor in causing the high mortality may be ignored. Segregation in tuberculosis is one of the most effectual preventive measures against the spread of the disease, the need for additional bed accommodation if tuberculosis is to be adequately dealt with is stressed, and it is suggested that, with a widely scattered population in some Welsh areas, small local institutions of a simpler type might be a valuable adjunct to the more fully equipped hospitals. The Committee recommends the provision of additional laboratory accommodation, and suggest that the proposal to establish a village settlement in Wales should be explored.

It is pointed out that after-care work has made little headway in Wales, and although the Committee does not recommend that the Association should undertake this work, the hope is expressed that local authorities will realize the importance of setting up effective care organizations. Treatment is only one aspect of tuberculosis work, and the importance of preventive work should be realized. Unfortunately, over large areas in Wales, preventive duties are neglected or are carried out imperfectly by local

authorities, who do not appear fully to realize their responsibilities. In regard to housing, the report states that in rural areas, villages and small towns there are hundreds of houses that are unfit for habitation. The Committee also points out that there is scope for much improvement in the provision of milk and meals in schools, and authorities in Wales as a whole, with few exceptions, make little or no provision for midday meals. The Committee concludes by directing attention to the great disparity among local authorities in the standard of performance of public health services, and remarks that many of the authorities, owing to small population and inadequate resources of their area, are incapable of carrying out their public health duties properly. The Committee was impressed with the general efficiency of the Welsh National Memorial Association's work for the treatment of tuberculosis.

Launch of the R.R.S. *Research*

THE launching of the Admiralty non-magnetic ship, the R.R.S. *Research*, will take place at 6 p.m. on April 4 at the Noss Works, Dartmouth, of the builders Messrs. Philip and Son, Limited. The launching ceremony will be performed by Mrs. Spencer Jones, wife of the Astronomer Royal. The day and time of the launching have been chosen to coincide with the highest spring tides, as investigations proved that the *Research*, which is a 770-ton ship, would need all the water possible. The construction of a special vessel such as this, which is to be so far as possible non-magnetic, raises many problems. The question of the best substitutes for iron or steel in various components and fittings has required a good deal of investigation and experiment. The builders have shown a great interest in the work and have co-operated with the Admiralty to obtain the most satisfactory results. Lieut.-Commander D. H. Fryer, who has been appointed captain of the *Research*, was given special leave by the Admiralty to make a voyage to Australia in one of the grain ships in order to gain experience of sailing ships. He has recently completed the rigging of a scale water-line model of the *Research*, which will be on view at the reception to be given by Messrs. Philip and Son after the launching.

Recent Researches in Steel Metallurgy

IN a Friday evening discourse at the Royal Institution on March 17, Dr. W. H. Hatfield discussed what he described as the three principal aspects of steel research: (a) elucidation and improvement of the process of steel manufacture and manipulation; (b) the investigation of the properties of steel under variable conditions approximating to those of service; and (c) the exploration of the influence of added elements and of the effect of heat-treatment. Dr. Hatfield showed a colour film illustrating the electric and open-hearth steel processes, the casting of ingots and forging operations. Dr. Hatfield said that one of the most complex studies is that of the changing properties of steels with varying temperature, this