

NEWS AND VIEWS

Prof. F. Vejdovsky

DESPITE the disturbed political situation and international tension, Czech men of science and their friends intend, if possible, to celebrate next October the ninetieth birthday of one of Bohemia's most distinguished living sons, Prof. František Vejdovský, who was born on October 24, 1849. After studying at the Charles University of Prague, and already as a young man winning fame as a zoologist, he was elected professor of zoology, comparative anatomy and embryology in the Charles University in 1892,



PROF. F. VEJDOVSKY

retiring as professor emeritus in 1921. During his long life, Vejdovsky has not only been very active as a teacher and leader among Czech zoologists, he has also, by his own researches and those of his numerous pupils, contributed largely to the advancement of many different branches of zoology. His own work covers a very wide field, but it has dealt mainly with the morphology, development and systematics of various Invertebrata, and with cytology—especially spermatogenesis, fertilization and problems connected with the centrosome and the chromosomes. On these and other matters he has published some ten large treatises, and more than a hundred other memoirs in Czech, English, American, French and German periodicals.

In his own country, Prof. Vejdovsky has long been held in the highest esteem, and his accomplishments and his personal kindness have endeared him to a wide circle of friends and correspondents abroad.

Few men attain the age of ninety years, and fewer still can look back upon so long a lifetime spent in the wholehearted pursuit of science for its own sake. Prof. Vejdovsky has lived through the classical periods of Darwinism and Mendelism, and has actually seen the rise of modern cytology—to which he contributed an honourable share—and he has hitherto survived the prolonged ordeals which his nation has suffered during this century. All true men of science everywhere must therefore offer him respectful congratulations on his approaching birthday, and wish him and his people that peace and future happiness which, by their steadfast devotion to science and civilization, they so richly deserve.

Petrus Camper, F.R.S. (1722-1789)

THE fifteenth volume of the *Opuscula Selecta Neerlandicorum de Arte Medica*, which has recently been published under the able editorship of Dr. B. W. T. Nuyens, of Amsterdam, contains the illustrated travel diaries in Dutch and English of the three visits to England made by Petrus Camper, who was not only one of the most eminent Dutch medical men in the second half of the eighteenth century, but was also a botanist, zoologist, mineralogist, palæontologist and draughtsman of distinction. The first visit, in 1749, three years after his qualification, was chiefly undertaken for the purpose of attending the lectures of William Smellie, the father of British gynaecology, and of taking lessons in drawing at the Royal Academy. During his stay in Great Britain he made the acquaintance of many of the leading scientific men of the day, including Sir Hans Sloane, Sir Joseph Banks, F. W. Herschel, John and William Hunter, John Smeaton, Mead and Cheselden. He attended the meetings of the Royal Society, of which he was made a fellow in 1750, visited the hospitals and museums and showed the keenest interest in contemporary scientific novelties. He did not confine his attention to London, but visited Oxford, Cambridge, Bath, Bristol and Birmingham, where he made the acquaintance of Withering and James Watt. In the next two visits which he paid in 1752, when he was professor at Franeker, and in 1785, a few years before his death, his energy and enthusiasm still appeared to be unabated, and his time was profitably spent in a congenial scientific atmosphere.

New Technical Branch for the Royal Air Force

OFFICIAL confirmation was given recently of a decision to form a separate technical specialist branch of the Royal Air Force. It has become increasingly obvious that, owing to the technical complexity of the problems relating to service aircraft and their equipment, it is necessary to allocate personnel to engineering and technical duties, allowing them to devote their whole time to such work and arranging various courses of training for them. Up to the present, the policy of the Royal Air Force