

has recalled, he was a generous contributor to the funds for the excavation of Ur; and a visit to the site of the excavation was one of the few occasions on which he travelled in the East. Another which afforded him an even greater delight than that he experienced in Mesopotamia was when in 1935 he travelled in China with R. L. Hobson of the British Museum to help in selecting exhibits for the International Exhibition of Chinese Art held in London in the following winter. The welcome he then received in China was such as befitted his eminence as a collector and expert, and was in a sense the crowning reward of his career.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Prof. Czeslav Białobrzęski, professor of theoretical physics in the University of Warsaw recently executed by the German authorities in Poland, aged sixty years.

Sir John Withers, M.P., who has represented the University of Cambridge in Parliament since 1926, a former president of the Alpine Club and member of the Mount Everest Committee, on December 29, aged seventy-six years.

Prof. Hans Ziemann, professor of internal medicine in the University of Berlin, aged seventy-four years.

## NEWS AND VIEWS

### Seventy Years Ago

ON November 4, 1869, the first issue appeared of a new "weekly illustrated journal of science" entitled *NATURE*. It was under the able and forceful editorship of Sir Norman Lockyer, who secured the support of the leading men of science of the day for the new venture. Turning back in thought to those days, it will be seen that there is a certain parallelism between world affairs of that time and the present international situation. Prussia had defeated Austria and its German allies, and had emerged as a leading European power. Strategic railways had been built to the eastern and western frontiers, and tension between Germany and France increased until in July 1870 war was declared. The campaign was relatively short, but its consequences were momentous and have determined much of the history of the past half-century. It seemed worth while, therefore, to turn back to the early pages of *NATURE*, to note the reaction of scientific men and affairs to the course of events, and to observe the progress of science as recorded week by week in this journal. Let this be sufficient reason for the column of quotations and notes, taken from the first number of *NATURE* to appear in 1870, which is printed elsewhere in this issue (p. 41). It is proposed to publish week by week similar extracts from the issues of *NATURE* of "seventy years ago", in the hope that scientific workers will derive both profit and pleasure from these contemporary accounts of scientific thought and events.

### Royal Meteorological Society: Symons Gold Medal

THE decision of the Council of the Royal Meteorological Society to award the Symons Gold Medal for 1940 to Dr. J. Bjerknes will be very popular among British meteorologists, to whom he has become well known during his frequent visits to this country. In 1932 the Medal was awarded to his father, Prof. V. Bjerknes, and it is fitting that the son, who shared the work, should also share the honours. Dr. J. Bjerknes is well known for his numerous and penetrating memoirs on the structure of barometric depressions and on the mechanism of the atmospheric

circulation. Among his earlier papers we may mention "On the Structure of Moving Cyclones" (1919), and (with H. Solberg) "Meteorological Conditions for the Formation of Rain" (1921), and "The Life Cycle of Cyclones and the Polar Front Theory of Atmospheric Circulation" (1922) in which he laid down the principle of 'cyclone families' and emphasized the role taken by depressions as an integral part of the exchange of air between high and low latitudes.

Later, while temporarily on the staff of the British Meteorological Office, Dr. Bjerknes compiled "Practical Examples of Polar-Front Analysis over the British Isles in 1925-6", published as Geophysical Memoir No. 50, and he has since analysed in great detail, on the bases of both surface and upper air observations, a number of depressions presenting special features. In 1933 the accumulated research of the Norwegian school of meteorologists into the dynamics of the atmosphere was published in book form under the title "Physikalische Hydrodynamik" by V. and J. Bjerknes, H. Solberg and T. Bergeron. Dr. Bjerknes is still young, and we look forward to further important research in future from these brilliant Norwegians.

### University of Oxford: Chair of Forestry

MR. H. G. CHAMPION has recently been appointed to fill the chair of forestry at Oxford in succession to the late Prof. R. S. Troup. Mr. Champion graduated at Oxford with first-class honours in chemistry and botany. He went out to India in the Forest Service in 1915 and was posted to the United Provinces. After successful work in divisional and working plans posts he was selected for appointment as silviculturist at the Forestry Institute at Dehra Dun. In this post he carried out some notable work. Perhaps Mr. Champion's most important contributions to silvicultural research in India and Burma were a "Silvicultural Research Manual for India", in two volumes—"The Experimental Manual" and "The Statistical Code"—and a "Preliminary Survey of the Forest Types in India and Burma".

The opening paragraph of the "Research Manual" is testimony to Mr. Champion's methods—"Research work ought never to be hampered by compulsory adherence to any prescribed methods of investigation or of recording. This does not, however, prevent the research worker from receiving considerable aid from the results of his own experience and that of others". This dictum he illustrated in his "Problem of the Pure Teak Plantation", which included valuable notes supplied by the Forest Research Institute of the Dutch East Indies. Other monographs published were notes on *Pinus longifolia*; contributions towards a knowledge of twisted fibre in trees; the importance of the origin of seed used in forestry; rejuvenation and management of sal (*Shorea robusta*); and a "Manual of Indian Sylviculture" (with Sir Gerald Trevor). In addition to visiting all parts of India and Burma as sylviculturist, Mr. Champion was asked by the Government to advise on the management of the Ceylon forests. He visited North America, Japan and Malaya to study local forest soil conservation problems, and saw something of the Kenya forests on his way home on leave in 1939.

#### Prof. W. P. Jorissen

THE Netherlands Chemical Society announced on December 23 that Prof. W. P. Jorissen is retiring from the editorship of the *Chemisch Weekblad* after serving that journal for thirty years. Although Holland is a small country, it has for many centuries been to the fore in the advancement of science, and Prof. Jorissen, who celebrated his seventieth birthday on November 11, 1939, will rank as one of the country's most distinguished chemists. Since his first paper in 1894 dealing with the oxidation of phosphorus, he and his collaborators have contributed many papers from the laboratory for physical chemistry at the University of Leyden. The most important of these deal with his detailed study of the regions of reactions among gases, and even among solids, and with the physical chemistry of explosions (notably the limits). In addition to his academic and research activities at Leyden, Prof. Jorissen, who is an excellent linguist, was editor-in-chief of the *Recueil des travaux chimiques des Pays-Bas* as well as of the *Chemisch Weekblad*. This brought him into lasting contact with the many British chemists who have had occasion to contribute to this Netherlands monthly journal, which publishes communications in French, German and English. We join with his Netherlands colleagues in wishing Prof. Jorissen a long and happy retirement.

#### Parliamentary and Scientific Committee:

##### New Chairman

At the last general meeting of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee at the House of Commons, Captain L. F. Plugge, M.P., was unanimously elected chairman. Captain Plugge is a science graduate of the University of London and also of the University of Brussels. During the War of 1914-18, when serving with the Royal Naval Air Service, he was

the Admiralty representative at the National Physical Laboratory at Teddington. He also served on the directorate of Aeronautical Research at the Air Ministry under Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, when he evolved in collaboration with Dr. Thurston the design of the first military aeroplane constructed entirely in metal to be built in Great Britain. He has been a fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society since 1923, and was responsible for the Society's glossary of aeronautical terms (French translation). His work on wireless, which has covered the last fifteen years, is well known, and he is an authority on matters relating to broadcasting.

#### The University of Cracow

EXPRESSIONS of sympathy have been received by the Polish Ambassador in Great Britain from universities in Great Britain, the Association of University Teachers and the Universities Bureau of the British Empire in reply to a statement concerning German activities in connexion with the University of Cracow (*The Times*, Dec. 22). It appears that the members of the teaching staff of the University were invited to attend a conference at which the German attitude toward Polish men of learning was to be explained. The tone of the address offended the audience, who walked out, to find lorries waiting outside, in which they were removed and sent eventually to a concentration camp in Germany.

It is stated that 160 members of the University are involved, including Prof. Kazimierz Kostanecki, a former president of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and Adam Krzyzanowski, a distinguished economist, who has since died. A message from the University of Leeds contains the following passage: "The members of the Senate of the University of Leeds . . . desire to place on record their strong condemnation of an action which can have no military justification and must be regarded as part of a deliberate and wanton attempt to destroy the culture and learning of the Polish peoples." We are sure that readers of NATURE will be in hearty support of this view.

#### The University of Birmingham

THE University of Birmingham has settled down to war conditions more smoothly than was anticipated, thanks largely to the recruiting policy of the Government whereby some of the deplorable errors of the War of 1914-18 in the waste of ability of university students have been avoided. The number of students in some departments has actually increased, and in the department of medicine in particular the number of full-time freshmen has reached a total of forty-four more than that of last year. The Nuffield Physics Extension Block is nearly ready for occupation, but the exigencies of war-time have unfortunately interrupted the building of Prof. Oliphant's large cyclotron, which is to be the chief feature of the new block.

The new gymnasium of the University also is nearly complete, and it is hoped that it will be used in the near future for physical training. The plans for extension of the Students' Union have had