

Prof. F. A. Lindemann, F.R.S.

ALL who know Prof. F. A. Lindemann, professor of experimental philosophy in the University of Oxford, will be glad that the King has conferred the honour of a barony on him. Prof. Lindemann is one of the few men of science to rise to a position of influence in affairs in our time and quite possibly the youngest man of science ever to be elevated to the House of Lords. Those who profess to see in him merely "the man of mystery behind Churchill" or who laud him as the inventor of everything or depreciate him as the thwarted of all good schemes, do injustice to a man of great personality and remarkable parts. At the Prime Minister's right hand he is peculiarly well placed. His foresight, his wide knowledge of the scientific problems that the age and the War have brought forth, his great ingenuity, never more acutely shown than when difficulties are greatest, and his abundant courage, are, perhaps, his most serviceable qualities. There is one other quality, however, of great importance. Prof. Lindemann has a knowledge of the mentality of the French and Germans (he was educated at Darmstadt, Berlin and Paris) which few of the Government advisers could have and more 'realistic' than official advisers or diplomats seem to have had. This Continental experience of his, no less than his scientific insight and personal gifts, should stand him in good stead as a member of the Upper House, and in his present responsible position.

The Right Hon. Winston Churchill, F.R.S.

A UNIQUE ceremony took place in the Cabinet Room at 10 Downing Street on June 12, when the President of the Royal Society, Sir Henry Dale, admitted the Prime Minister into the fellowship of the Society. Among those present were the Society's biological secretary, Prof. A. V. Hill, M.P., the physical secretary, Prof. A. C. G. Egerton, the foreign secretary, Sir Henry Tizard, and the assistant secretary, Mr. John D. Griffith Davies. After the Prime Minister had signed his name in the ancient Charter Book, Sir Henry Dale showed him the signature of his ancestor, Sir Winston Churchill, father of the great Duke of Marlborough, who was one of the early fellows of the Society, having been admitted into the fellowship in 1664.

The Union Observatory, Johannesburg

THE Union Astronomer, Dr. H. E. Wood, director of the Union Observatory, Johannesburg, retired on February 3. Dr. Wood, who was educated at the University of Manchester, was appointed assistant at the Transvaal Observatory, under the directorship of the late Dr. R. T. A. Innes in 1908. The work of that Observatory had been largely meteorological, of a routine nature, but after the appointment of Dr. Innes as director, the astronomical work was developed, new instrumental equipment was obtained and the Observatory—the name of which was changed to the Union Observatory in 1912—became one of the most important in the southern hemisphere. Dr. Wood succeeded Dr. Innes as Union Astronomer, on the latter's retirement in 1927. He

has been particularly interested in the observation of minor planets and comets; he discovered many new minor planets and computed many orbits of minor planets and comets. Dr. Wood has also been an assiduous observer of occultations of stars by the moon, and the large number of occultations observed at the Union Observatory for many years has been of the greatest value in the study of the moon's motion. Dr. Wood has been closely associated with the South African Association for the Advancement of Science, of which he was for many years one of the secretaries and of which he was president in 1931.

Dr. H. E. Wood has been succeeded as Union Astronomer by Dr. van den Bos, who started his astronomical career as an assistant at the Leyden Observatory. A scheme of co-operation between the Union Observatory and the Leyden Observatory had been arranged, under which the Leyden Observatory—which has a large staff but poor observing conditions—should station one member of its staff at the Union Observatory—which has a small staff but good observing conditions—to whom all necessary facilities should be offered. Under this scheme Dr. van den Bos, whose primary interest is double-star observation, went to Johannesburg in 1926 to make observations of double stars with the large 26½-in. visual refractor. In 1927 he was transferred to the staff of the Union Observatory, becoming chief assistant in succession to Dr. Wood, on his appointment as Union Astronomer. Dr. van den Bos is not only an assiduous and accurate double-star observer but has also computed many double star orbits. With the collaboration between Dr. van den Bos and Mr. Finsen, one of his assistants, the Union Observatory is now making a more important contribution than any other observatory to double star astronomy. Among interesting observations made by Dr. van den Bos and Mr. Finsen have been the apparent triplicity of Nova Pictoris, a few years after its outburst, the three nuclei showing a progressively increasing separation; also the figure-of-eight appearance of the asteroid Eros at the 1931 opposition, which rotated in the period of the variation of brightness of Eros.

U.S. National Academy of Sciences: Recent Elections

AT the annual meeting of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, recently held at Washington, the following were elected foreign associates: Prof. E. D. Adrian, professor of physiology in the University of Cambridge; Prof. A. V. Hill, secretary of the Royal Society and Foulerton research professor (NATURE, May 10, p. 573); Sir Arthur Keith, formerly Hunterian professor of the Royal College of Surgeons (NATURE, May 24, p. 639).

The following American men of science were elected to membership: Prof. W. E. Bachmann, associate professor of chemistry in the University of Michigan; Dr. R. J. Dubos, associate in bacteriology in the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research; Prof. E. A. Graham, professor of medicine in Washington University (St. Louis); Dr. A. S. King, superintendent of the physical laboratory, Mount