

OBITUARIES

Prof. James Wilson

THE first professor to be appointed to the chair of agriculture in the Royal College of Science for Ireland by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland was James Wilson, a Scotsman who, as a student and a young agriculturist, had already won distinction in his native country, and whose death occurred on December 9, 1941. It is now forty years since he delivered his first set of lectures to Irish students, who for a period of twenty years received from him successive courses in technical agriculture and to whom the memory of Wilson will ever remain dear.

He very quickly gained knowledge of Irish conditions and made a special study of the economics of agriculture in the country. Numerous papers on this subject appeared in the *Journal* of the Department of Agriculture and elsewhere. As a result, Wilson's influence soon extended beyond the sphere of the lecture room and in a short time he became a leading figure in the field of Irish agriculture. Naturally, a man of his talent found himself in conflict with certain aspects of agricultural practice, and, consequently, much of his writing was of a controversial nature. He thought independently and wrote forcibly, but his pleasing style and frank exposition won the admiration of his readers, while his erudition commanded the respect even of those with whom he disagreed.

Wilson's greatest contribution was, however, in the sphere of scientific agriculture. He was an ardent student and an untiring worker, and his many publications on the breeding and feeding of farm stock testify to his industry and ability. Most of his scientific work is recorded in the *Scientific Proceedings of the Royal Dublin Society*, in the activities of which he took the keenest interest. He specialized in Mendelian heredity. Among his productions on this and cognate subjects are the following books: "A Manual of Mendelism", "The Principles of Stock Breeding", "The Evolution of British Cattle". Later his attention was directed to stock feeding, on which subject numerous contributions flowed from his pen. The comprehensive volume, "The Principles of Stock Feeding", was his latest big work in this connexion.

As a lecturer and teacher Wilson endeared himself to his students. His geniality was overflowing and his method of imparting knowledge quite fascinating. Formal lectures he disliked: he preferred to converse with his class and a feature of his lecture was that the students talked as much as the professor. His students are now engaged in a variety of agricultural activities where the influence of the teacher will be manifest for many a year.

J. P. DREW.

Mr. Geoffrey Milne

THE death, at Nairobi on January 16, of Mr. Geoffrey Milne, of the East African Research Station, Amani, at the age of forty-three, deprives the world of a most able and experienced investigator of tropical soils. Mr. Milne, who was the brother of Prof. E. A. Milne, Rouse Ball professor of mathematics in the University of Oxford, graduated at the University of Leeds in 1921, to which he returned after a period as agricultural chemist in the University of Aberdeen, to occupy a post in the Department of Agriculture. He joined the staff at Amani in 1928

and quickly earned a reputation in the field of soil geography. It is largely due to his efforts that soil cartography has been unified throughout the East African dependencies and a rational basis established for soil classification. He combined in an unusual degree the qualifications of a geographer and a laboratory worker, and of a theoretical and a practical soil scientist.

Mr. Milne will be remembered chiefly as the editor and principal compiler of the first soil map of East Africa, published in 1936. The map, though necessarily incomplete, introduced many novel features of soil cartography. In particular Milne made use for the first time of the concept of the 'catena', a sequence of several soil types recurring in regular order in association with certain types of topography, usually undulating or hummocky. This marked the formal recognition by soil cartographers that the delineation of type of landscape may be equally important on a soil map as type of soil.

In recent years Milne was much occupied by the urgent practical problems of soil conservation in East Africa, and in 1938 made an extensive tour of the American soil-conservation stations. Afterwards he published a report of his tour that gave an exceptionally vivid picture of the state and organization of soil research work in the United States. At the time of his death, he was about to take up the post of scientific secretary to the East African Supplies Board.

Prof. F. von Müller

PROF. FRIEDRICH VON MÜLLER, emeritus professor of internal medicine at Munich, a brief announcement of whose death appeared in the *Schweizerische medizinische Wochenschrift* of November 29, was born on September 17, 1858, the son of the director of the Augsburg Hospital. After studying medicine at Würzburg and Munich, where he qualified in 1882, he became assistant to Prof. Carl Gerhardt, whom he accompanied to Berlin in 1885. He was afterwards appointed professor of medicine at Marburg, Basle and finally at Munich, where he became director of the Second Medical Clinic.

According to Garrison, who describes him as "perhaps the most scientific teacher of internal medicine to-day", he had one of the most largely attended clinics in Europe. He was well known in Great Britain, where he was elected an honorary member of the Clinical Section of the Royal Society of Medicine in 1933. His first publications were devoted to problems of physiological chemistry, such as the metabolism of albumin, fat absorption, the origin of urobilin, and metabolism in fever and convalescence. Later he directed his attention to various departments of internal medicine, including intestinal intoxication, exophthalmic goitre, Bright's disease and bronchitis. His principal books were a handbook of clinical diagnosis in collaboration with O. Seifert (1886), investigations on two fasting men (1893) and some problems in metabolism and nutrition (1900).

J. D. ROLLESTON.

We regret to announce the following deaths:

Prof. T. Levi-Civita, For. Mem. R.S., formerly professor of mechanics in the University of Rome, on December 29, aged sixty-eight.

Prof. Virgilio Tedeschi, professor of biological physics in the National University of La Plata.