

NEWS AND VIEWS

Chair of Biochemistry in the University of Cambridge

PROF. A. C. CHIBNALL, whose appointment to succeed Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins as professor of biochemistry in the University of Cambridge has recently been announced, has for some time been recognized as one of the most distinguished biochemists in Great Britain. Since the time when, following upon a period of study with the late T. B. Osborne in Newhaven and some years of work at University College, London, Prof. Chibnall succeeded the late S. B. Schryver at the Imperial College, he and his pupils have maintained a steady output of work on problems of plant biochemistry. His earlier work was chiefly concerned with lipoid constituents of plants; this subject had formerly been in great confusion, and Chibnall, with the aid of his own highly developed chemical technique reinforced by valuable collaboration in X-ray analysis from Dr. S. H. Piper, was the first to bring it into order. Later he devoted more attention to proteins and other nitrogenous constituents of plants in relation to problems of nitrogen metabolism; this work formed the subject of his Silliman lectures and of the monograph which he based on them. More recently Chibnall has become interested in fundamental problems of protein structure, to which he has made important contributions, adopting the analytical approach and constantly insisting on the precision of technique which has been characteristic of all his work. Prof. Chibnall therefore leaves the important school of plant biochemistry, which he has built up at the Imperial College, with a wide experience behind him and well fitted to take charge of the most distinguished biochemical laboratory in Great Britain.

Chair of Chemistry in University College, Bangor

UNDER the late Prof. Kennedy Orton, the Department of Chemistry of the University College of North Wales, Bangor, became one of the first of those modern schools of research which are concerned with the elucidation of the nature and mechanism of the reactions of organic chemistry. It therefore seems appropriate that Dr. Edward David Hughes, one of Prof. Orton's many distinguished pupils, should follow Prof. J. L. Simonsen in Prof. Orton's chair. After graduating in Bangor with first class honours in chemistry in 1927, Dr. Hughes commenced, under the leadership of his professor and of Dr. H. B. Watson, then on the College staff at Bangor, his first researches in the general field to which he has contributed so considerably. For this work he was awarded the Ph.D. degree and a studentship of the University of Wales in 1930. In that year he proceeded to University College, London, and there, first as a research student under Prof. C. K. Ingold, than as a research fellow, and finally as a member of the College staff, he continued the work which brought him in rapid succession the highest research degrees of the University of London, the British Ramsay Fellowship, and, in 1936, the Meldola Medal of the Institute of Chemistry (awarded for the most distinguished chemical work carried out under the age of thirty). Dr. Hughes is author or joint author of more than

seventy papers published in British and American scientific journals. His most noted work relates to the establishment of ionization (or 'heterolysis') as controlling phase in a large class of substitution and elimination reactions of saturated molecules and ions, the discovery of the rules governing the spatial orientation of substitution (including a demonstration, by the use of radio-halogens, of the invariability of Walden inversion in bimolecular substitution), and the elucidation of circumstances which control the appearance of steric hindrance in substitution processes.

Chair of Physics at University College, Dundee

MR. G. D. PRESTON, whose appointment to the Harris chair of physics at University College, Dundee, has recently been announced, is best known for his applications of physical methods to metallurgical problems. After leaving Cambridge, he joined the staff of the National Physical Laboratory, working first in the Physics Department and later in the Department of Metallurgy. His chief interest has lain in X-ray crystallography and more particularly in its applications to metallurgy. In collaboration with Prof. E. A. Owen, he was one of the pioneers in the investigation by X-ray methods of alloy systems, and succeeded in determining the structure of various alloys and alloy systems. In addition to his work in the X-ray field, he has also applied the method of electron diffraction successfully to problems of metallurgy and to the study of corrosion. He was one of the first in Great Britain to construct and use the electron microscope. Mr. Preston's more recent work has been concerned with the age-hardening of alloys. During these investigations he found the diffuse X-ray reflexions which have been the subject of so much experiment and discussion of late. His work has thrown much light on their nature and origin. His researches have been notable for the fact that they have been carried out almost entirely with apparatus designed and constructed in his own laboratory, and much ingenuity has been shown in producing equipment essentially simple, but eminently suited for the task in hand. It is to be hoped that in his new sphere Mr. Preston will have ample opportunities for further research.

Royal Society : New Foreign Members

AT a meeting of the Royal Society on May 20, the following were elected foreign members :

Dr. Bernardo Albert Houssay, professor of physiology in the University of Buenos Ayres. He is distinguished for his researches on endocrine glands and is a leader of an important centre of biological research.

Dr. Victor Moritz Goldschmidt, professor of mineralogy and geology in the University of Oslo since 1936. He was formerly professor of mineralogy and petrology in the Universities of Oslo (1914-29) and Göttingen (1929-36). He has made fundamental contributions to petrology on the genesis of the crystalline schists in progressive metamorphism, while his researches have laid the foundation of the science of crystal chemistry. In geology, using chiefly the methods of analysis of quantitative optical and X-ray spectroscopy, he has determined the principles that govern the minor elements in the earth's crust and meteorites.