

## NEWS and VIEWS

## Electrical Engineering at Birmingham :

Prof. D. M. Robinson

THE chair of electrical engineering at the University of Birmingham has been filled by the appointment of Dr. Denis M. Robinson. Prof. Robinson, who is in his fortieth year, graduated as B.Sc.(Eng.) at King's College, London, in 1928; he was awarded the degree of Ph.D. of London in 1930, and had industrial training at Siemens and Metropolitan-Vickers. During 1929-31 he was a research student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, publishing a paper on "Unpolarised Resistivity of Glass". During 1931-35 he held a research appointment with Callender's Cables, Ltd., his work being published in 1935 as a monograph entitled "High Voltage Cables". Later he held a research appointment in television engineering, an experience which led to his being taken into the Air Ministry in December 1939, where he is working in the Tele-communication Research Establishment. His service, which involves frequent visits to the United States, has been connected with developments of new discoveries and the putting of these into production. He has thus been brought into contact with all the important electrical engineering firms controlling new developments. Prof. Robinson is therefore exceptionally qualified to effect the union of fundamental advances in physics with the established branches of electrical engineering.

## Bank of England Trust Fund for Research in Economics

To mark the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Bank of England, the Court of Directors has decided to establish a trust fund with a capital of £100,000 for the promotion of economic research. The fund will be known as the Houblon-Norman Fund, after Sir John Houblon, the first governor of the Bank in 1694, and Mr. Montagu Norman, who retired recently after holding the office of governor for twenty-four years. The income of the fund will be used to award fellowships, probably three a year, to be known as Houblon-Norman Fellowships, for the promotion of research into the working and function of financial and business institutions in Great Britain and elsewhere and the economic conditions affecting them. Grants may also be made toward the expenses of research already in being and to facilitate publication.

Although the Bank of England will follow with interest the activities of the trust, the management of the trust will be independent of the Bank, the first trustees being the deputy governor (Mr. B. G. Catterns), Lord Eustace Percy and Mr. Samuel Courtauld. In making awards the trustees will be assisted by an expert committee, the first members of which will be Mr. Henry Clay, warden-elect of Nuffield College, Oxford, economic adviser to the Bank of England, and previously professor of social economics in the University of Manchester; Sir Hubert Henderson, recently elected professor of political economy in the University of Oxford, now serving as economic adviser to his Majesty's Treasury; and Prof. A. M. Carr-Saunders, director of the London School of Economics and formerly professor of social science in the University of Liverpool. The trustees will announce in due course when they are open to receive applications for fellowships.

Distribution of Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) in Great Britain

THE Biology War Committee has been requested by the Agricultural Research Council to collect information and afterwards to plan sample surveys of the distribution of the spindle tree (*Euonymus europaeus*) in Great Britain. This scheme is part of the general research programme into the biology of the bean aphid (*Aphis fabae* (*A. rumicis*)) which overwinters on this plant. The damage done by the bean aphid to the sugar-beet crop alone is estimated to reach a million pounds in some seasons, and proper knowledge of the distribution of its primary winter host is essential in any consideration of the problems of control. The Committee therefore asks for the following information from anyone able to supply it: (1) The exact location (reference one inch or six inch map if possible) of areas which can be put in the following categories: (i) spindle totally absent; (ii) spindle rare or occasional (isolated bushes 1-2 plants per square mile); (iii) spindle frequent (intermediate density between (ii) and (iv)); (iv) spindle unusually abundant (at least a hundred bushes per acre or ten plants per 100 yards of hedgerow); (data for *Euonymus* spp. in gardens should not be included). (2) The proportion by area which falls into each of the four foregoing categories of density. (3) The differences in (a) geological formation, (b) soil, (c) drainage, (d) altitude, (e) aspect, (f) other factors, which might influence the distribution of spindle. Such information should be sent before August 31 to Mr. G. E. Blackman, Hon. Secretary, Biology War Committee, Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, S.W.7.

## Scientific Books and Papers for China

THROUGH the Cultural Scientific Mission to China of the British Council, British men of science have learned of the great difficulties under which their Chinese colleagues are labouring to-day. Of the many obstacles to the pursuit of science in war-time China, not the least important is the scarcity of standard text- and reference books, and journals and reprints, which, equally with technical apparatus, are necessary for scientific teaching and research. The Natural Science Society of China (British Branch), through its president, Dr. S. P. Chu, and honorary secretary, Mr. P. M. Yap, is appealing for scientific and technological publications, which readers of *Nature*, either individually, or as organizations, can spare, to be sent to China. The great majority of Chinese scientific workers are accustomed to English texts and literature; indeed, many of them have obtained a part or the whole of their training in Great Britain, and the response to this appeal will be of significance, not merely as an expression of comradeship between British and Chinese scientific workers, but also as a constructive effort towards rehabilitating science in Free China. The British Council, 3 Hanover Street, London, W.1, has offered to receive on behalf of the Society such scientific literature as may be available; and it will be dispatched as opportunity offers to the Science Library of the Natural Science Society of China in Chungking.

## Determination of Distance by Radio

THE issues of the *Journal of the Franklin Institute* of January and February 1944 contain an article by C. D. Tuska entitled "Historical Notes on the Determination of Distance by Timed Radio Waves". This