

## NEWS and VIEWS

**New President of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.: Academician Sergei Vavilov**

ON July 17, Sergei Vavilov was elected as the new president of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., in succession to Vladimir Komarov, the botanist. Vavilov, who is a comparatively young man—he graduated in 1914—is one of the leading physicists in the U.S.S.R.: he is director of the Lebedev Institute of Physics, named after his former teacher, and directs the research at the State Institute of Optics. His own work has been mainly in various branches of the science of light. On the more academic side he has carried out important researches in the field of luminescence and fluorescence, having not only put forward a theory of luminescence of solutions but also developed a method of analysis, based on luminescence, which is being widely used in the U.S.S.R. On the applied side he has done much to develop in the U.S.S.R. the fluorescent discharge lamps for domestic and factory lighting which are now becoming so popular in Great Britain and the United States. Vavilov has also carried out distinguished work on the influence of the quantum nature of light on vision and on physiological optics in general. Reference to his active interest in the history of science, and in particular to his studies on Newton, is made in the article by Prof. E. N. da C. Andrade on the recent visit of British men of science as guests of the Academy of Sciences, which appears on p. 223 of this issue. In the jubilee celebrations of the Academy, Vavilov played an active part, and his British colleagues who met him will be delighted to hear of the great honour that has accrued to him.

In addition to his distinguished and varied scientific experience, Vavilov is well acquainted with the tasks of general administration. He is a member of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, to which he was elected in 1938, and his services as a scientific worker and as a man of affairs have been recognized by the award of the Stalin Prize, the highest scientific distinction in the U.S.S.R., and the Order of the Red Banner of Labour and the Order of Lenin, which are very high distinctions. Vavilov is thus accustomed to solving both difficult scientific problems and wide problems of general organization and administration and is, in general, admirably fitted by temperament and training for the very important position that he is now to fill.

**Chair of Botany at Leeds: Dr. Irene Manton**

WITH the appointment of Dr. Irene Manton, at present lecturer in botany in the University of Manchester, to the chair of botany in Leeds, in succession to the late Prof. J. H. Priestley, the Leeds Department may be expected to maintain its record of scholarship and vigorous research activity. Although Dr. Manton's published work lies chiefly in the sphere of cytology, her extended studentship—Cambridge, with additional courses pursued in Switzerland and Spain—her subsequent tenure of postgraduate studentships (the Ethel Sargent and Yarrow) in Sweden, Germany, Cambridge and the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, and further collecting journeys to France, the Mediterranean and Egypt, entitle her to be regarded as a botanist of wide general experience. This, together with her long teaching experience at Man-

chester (1930–45) and her skill as a cytologist will, without doubt, be seen to advantage as the Leeds Department develops under her guidance.

Dr. Manton's earlier work includes contributions to the cytological analysis of evolution. More recently, in collaboration with members of the staff of the National Institute for Medical Research, she has developed new technical methods whereby ultra-violet microscopy can be applied to problems of chromosome structure and in the resolution of nuclear problems, where the minute size of the objects under investigation has hitherto proved an insurmountable difficulty. This work, together with a comprehensive cytological survey of the Pteridophyta which is now approaching completion, will undoubtedly constitute a substantial contribution to botanical science.

**Chair of Chemistry at University College, Dublin: Appointment of Dr. T. S. Wheeler**

THE Senate of the National University of Ireland has appointed Dr. T. S. Wheeler to the chair of chemistry in University College, Dublin, in succession to the late Prof. T. J. Nolan. Dr. Wheeler was educated at the Royal College of Science for Ireland, and served on the staff of the Royal Technical College, Glasgow (1920–21), and as a research chemist at the Royal Naval Cordite Factory, and at the Research Department, Woolwich. In 1928 he joined the staff of the Winnington Research Laboratories of Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd., and was concerned with the investigation of a number of processes involving gas reactions at high temperatures and pressures. In 1931 he went to India as principal and professor of organic chemistry, Royal Institute of Science, Bombay. He took an active part in the scientific life of India, being for some time dean of the Faculty of Science of the University of Bombay, and a foundation fellow (sometime a vice-president) of the National Institute of Sciences of India. His research work in Bombay dealt mainly with the chemistry of chalkones and flavones. In 1938 Dr. Wheeler returned to Ireland as State chemist. He has been for the last seven years head of the State Laboratory, and has served on the Eire Emergency Research Bureau. Though primarily interested in organic chemistry, Dr. Wheeler has also published work on the theory of liquids. In this age of specialization Dr. Wheeler has had a varied career, typified by the fact that he is one of the few holding the three professional qualifications of fellowship of the Royal Institute of Chemistry and of the Institute of Physics and membership of the Institution of Chemical Engineers.

**American Chemical Society, New York Section: Dr. Cornelia T. Snell**

DR. CORNELIA T. SNELL, of Foster D. Snell, Inc., consulting chemists and chemical engineers of Brooklyn, N.Y., has been appointed chairman of the New York Section of the American Chemical Society. Dr. Snell, who succeeds Dr. Ross A. Baker, professor of chemistry in the School of Business and Civic Administration of the College of the City of New York, is the first woman to preside over the New York Section, which with 4,148 members is the largest of the Society's 106 local sections. She has been serving as chairman-elect of the Section and would have succeeded to the chairmanship in 1946 upon the expiration of Dr. Baker's term of office. Dr. Baker