

cereals and fruit came under investigation, and control measures were suggested. Later he gave considerable attention to locust and grasshopper outbreaks, arising from a widespread plague of grasshoppers in South Australia during 1933-35. This led to more generalized work on the ecology of insects, particularly in relation to climatic conditions, most of his later papers dealing with various aspects of this subject.

Soon after taking up work at Rothamsted, Davidson married Johanne Therese Hornemann, one of a very musical Copenhagen family. Three sons went out with them to Australia, a girl being born later. Their musical evenings at Harpenden will long be remembered by those who were fortunate enough to be invited.

W. E. BRENCHLEY.

#### Mr. R. C. Porter

MR. RALPH CLASSON PORTER, for thirty-seven years senior lecturer in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Birmingham, died at his home in Northfield on July 28, in his seventy-fourth year.

Mr. Porter was the son of the Rev. James Nixon Porter and was born at Heatley, Warrington, on August 14, 1871. He was educated at Clifton, and afterwards at the University of Liverpool, where he obtained a first class honours degree in engineering in 1892. After graduation he was for three years a premium pupil with Messrs. Beyer, Peacock & Co., Ltd., of Gorton, Manchester, and on completion of his pupillage spent a short time with the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway, obtaining running experience on the footplate. His enthusiasm for locomotives and locomotive engineering was to remain with him throughout his lifetime. For nearly four years after leaving the railway he was assistant manager of the rolling mills of the Frodingham Iron and Steel Company.

In 1899 Mr. Porter took up academic work and was appointed lecturer in engineering at the Polytechnic School of Engineering in Cairo. He left Cairo in 1901 when he was appointed lecturer in mechanical engineering at the University of Birmingham under

the late Prof. F. W. Burstall. His experience in Cairo made him especially sympathetic and understanding of the difficulties of students from the East who studied at Birmingham.

In 1901 the Department of Mechanical Engineering was at Mason College, and it devolved upon Mr. Porter to design and lay out the engineering workshops and the power station for the Department in the new University buildings at Edgbaston. The power station was responsible for the supply of heat, electric power and lighting to the whole of the University buildings, and was in addition used as a heat laboratory. During the period 1914-18 the University buildings at Edgbaston were used as a military hospital, Mr. Porter being responsible for the maintenance and for the installation of the additional plant required. When normal conditions returned, he reorganized and re-equipped the Department on a new site near the power station.

Throughout his long career as senior lecturer and director of the power station, he took a keen and active part in University life, and until his retirement represented the non-professorial staff on the University Council.

He leaves a widow and two sons, his eldest son, who was a research engineer with the L.M.S. Railway, having predeceased him.

WE regret to announce the following deaths :

Dr. William Cramer, who was associated with the Imperial Cancer Research Fund during 1914-39, on August 10, aged sixty-seven.

Mr. R. A. Rye, Goldsmiths' librarian of the University of London during 1906-44, on September 14, aged sixty-eight.

Dr. B. O. J. Schrieke, delegate for the Netherland Indies at the United Nations Conference and formerly professor of social anthropology in the University of Amsterdam and later director of the Anthropological Section of the Colonial Institute, Amsterdam, aged fifty-five.

Prof. C. E. Spearman, F.R.S., emeritus professor of psychology in the University of London, on September 17, aged eighty-two.

## NEWS and VIEWS

### Research and Development in the United States

IN his message of September 6 to Congress, President Truman called for the establishment of a new Federal Agency to implement the recommendations of Dr. Vannebar Bush's recent report, "Science—the Endless Frontier" (see *Nature*, August 4). The development of atomic energy, said the message, is a clear-cut indication of what can be accomplished by the universities, industry and Government working together. Vast scientific fields remain to be conquered in the same way to derive the full profit in the future from what we have learned. The President urged upon Congress the early adoption of legislation for the establishment of a single Federal research agency which would discharge the following functions: promote and support fundamental research and development projects in all matters pertaining to the defence and security of the United States; promote and support research in the basic sciences and in the social sciences, as well as in medicine, public

health and allied fields; provide financial assistance in the form of scholarships and grants for young men and women of proved scientific ability; co-ordinate and control scientific activities of Federal departments and agencies; and make fully, freely and publicly available to commerce, industry, agriculture and academic institutions the fruits of research financed by Federal funds. The message also called for an additional contribution of five hundred and fifty million dollars from the United States to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, and appealed for legislation for the early resumption of a vast programme of public works sponsored by the late President Roosevelt, urging that similar projects to the Tennessee Valley Authority should be undertaken for the development of the Columbia, Missouri and Arkansas Rivers and the central valley of California. "We shall seek," said the message also, "under the procedure prescribed in the lend-lease act and in subsequent agreements with other Govern-