

NEWS and VIEWS

Prof. F. E. Weiss, F.R.S.

ON November 2, Prof. F. E. Weiss will be guest of honour at a meeting attended by botanists and other men of science in the rooms of the Linnean Society of London to celebrate his eightieth birthday. It is doubtful whether any other man of science in Britain has exerted a greater influence over botanical research and teaching for so long a period as Prof. Weiss has; many botanists and other men of science owe much to his sympathetic guidance and encouragement in their formative years, and, with this in view, the Editors of *Nature* wish to add their contribution to the many messages of esteem which will assuredly greet him on this occasion, for Prof. Weiss has been a contributor to *Nature* over a very long period. But it was at Manchester where Prof. Weiss's main work was carried out: he was George Harrison professor of botany in the University there for thirty-eight years. We cannot do better than quote from the resolution adopted by the University Council on the occasion of his resignation from the chair in 1930: "During his tenure of the Chair he has built up a great School of Botany, which bears a distinguished name both at home and abroad. It is renowned for the researches which have been carried out by the members of the School and for the unusually large number of men and women it has trained who now occupy positions of influence in many spheres of botanical work." At Manchester, Prof. Weiss was also closely concerned with the development of the University itself, especially during 1913-15 when he was vice-chancellor.

On his resignation, Prof. Weiss moved to the south of England—not to rest, but to carry on much useful work with that zeal and understanding which always characterized his work at Manchester. The Linnean Society itself owes much to him—he was president during 1931-34. He has also influenced practical horticulture—he always has been a keen gardener—through his membership of the Council of the Royal Horticultural Society. The British Association owes much to the wise counsel and mature judgment of Prof. Weiss, especially since his release from academic duties at Manchester gave him more time to work for the advancement of science in general. He was joint honorary secretary of the important Committee on Post-War University Education which was constituted by the Association and which issued its report in 1944. It is doubtful if a man of Prof. Weiss's active and alert nature would ever consider resting in spite of a personal history of work for cultural advancement of which any man could be proud; we wish, therefore, to extend our congratulations to him on this occasion, and hope that science and education in general and botany in particular may long continue to have the advantage of his stimulating influence.

**Institute of Agricultural Economics, Oxford:
Retirement of Dr. C. S. Orwin**

AGRICULTURAL experts throughout Britain, and indeed over a wider area, will learn with regret that Dr. C. S. Orwin is due to retire at the end of this year from the Institute of Agricultural Economics at Oxford. He was its first director, and from the outset he started it on lines which have since proved very fruitful. He adopted the method of getting right down to the working details of farming by keeping farmers' account books and working out costs of

different operations under different conditions, and he published detailed descriptions of the methods of some of the more outstanding farms, especially where new lines have been struck out. In addition, he published an interesting account of the working of the old three-field system, and also of the reclamation of Exmoor. More recently he has devoted his attention to the replanning of British agriculture and village life, and has made some very thoughtful contributions to this important subject. His recent survey of a section of Oxfordshire is a brilliant example of this type of work. In these social and historical investigations he has been ably assisted by his wife who is herself an expert on these subjects. Not the least of his services has been the training of a staff some of the members of which have since rendered distinguished service in other institutions. His many friends will wish him long, pleasant and active year of retirement.

Agricultural Engineering Record

THE contents of the first number of *Agricultural Engineering Record* provide a good example of the intended scope of this publication, the main purpose of which is to place on record the results of the testing, experimental and research work of the National Institute for Agricultural Engineering Askham Bryan, York (London: H.M. Stationery Office. Pp. 32. 1s.). The subject selected for special review is segmented sugar-beet seed. This process which originated in the United States, breaks up the seed clusters before sowing by means of a machine thereby facilitating singling later. Tests carried out on large-scale observation plots in England are described, from which it appears that there was no difference in the yields of beet grown from segmented and natural seed. Another article gives the results of measurements of grain losses with the combine harvester, showing that such losses can easily be on an order which makes the process uneconomical; and it is suggested that attention be paid to improvements in the general design of the cutter-bar, as it is here that the greatest source of loss occurs. Comparative tests with three machines used in sugar-beet harvesting indicated that each was superior to the others in at least one respect, and work is in progress on the production of a composite machine. Grain bin ventilation, a grain flow meter, a coulter for ploughing-in straw and an offset potato-digger form the subjects of the shorter articles, and the number concludes with what is intended to be the chief feature of the publication, namely, summaries of the National Institute's test reports of implements or machines specially imported for research purposes or experimental prototypes not yet in production.

National Research Council (Canada): Post-War Planning

THE twenty-seventh annual report of the National Research Council (Canada), for 1943-44, includes the report of the acting president, Dr. C. J. McKenzie, the financial statement for the year ended March 31, 1944, and reports from the directors of the several divisions, amplifying the information contained in the preliminary review of the work of the Council already issued (see *Nature*, 155, 737; 1945). Referring to the broader aspects of post-war planning for scientific research, Dr. McKenzie's report states that in a brief review of research programmes in Canada, Great Britain, United States and the U.S.S.R. it was observed that Canada had hitherto been largely a