

internal combustion engines, and also various papers in engineering journals. He has contributed considerably to the science of heat transmission and the flow of gases, and to the theory of the internal combustion engine applied to modern developments. His interests lie both in fundamental thermodynamics and fluid mechanics, and in applications of the gas turbine prime mover to the propulsion of aircraft, ships and for the generation of power on land. He is chairman of the Turbines, Jets and Rockets Sub-Committee of the Aeronautical Research Council, chairman of the Mechanical Engineering Panel of the Ministry of Aircraft Production Gas Turbine Collaboration Committee and chairman of the Submarine Propulsion Sub-Committee of the Admiralty Scientific Advisory Panel.

Sir John Lennard-Jones, K.B.E., F.R.S.

ALTHOUGH he has held the Plummer chair of theoretical chemistry in the University of Cambridge for fourteen years, only for about one half of that time has Sir John Lennard-Jones been the academic man pure and simple. Since early in the War he has been a Government servant; and his resignation from the post of Director General of Scientific Research (Defence) has just been announced. Sir John first left his university post, to which he is now returning, in 1939, when he joined the Ministry of Supply to take charge of a group of scientific workers. Later, as chief superintendent of armament research, he controlled research being done for all three Fighting Services. His wide experience in the armaments field goes back to the First World War, when he left the R.F.C. as a flying officer to work at the Experimental Station at Orfordness. Latterly, as Director-General of Defence Research, he was in charge of a dozen stations scattered the length and breadth of Britain. Although he is now going back to Cambridge, Sir John will still be connected with the Ministry of Supply, the University having agreed to make his services available on a part-time basis as chief scientific adviser.

Physics at Reading :

Prof. R. W. Ditchburn

PROF. R. W. DITCHBURN, who has been appointed to succeed Prof. J. A. Crowther in the chair of physics in the University of Reading (see *Nature* of March 30, p. 148), graduated at Liverpool. In 1922 he went to Cambridge, where he worked under Sir J. J. Thomson in the Cavendish Laboratory on the continuous absorption of light in potassium vapour. He held the Isaac Newton studentship during 1925-28. In 1928 he was elected fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, and in the following year became Erasmus Smith's professor of natural and experimental philosophy. His researches in Dublin extended his earlier work on the continuous absorption of light in vapours of alkali metals. He also worked on the theory of optical instruments and the properties of thin films. During the War he returned temporarily to England to work for the Admiralty on problems connected with the psycho-physics of vision. Having wide humane interests and a natural capacity for administration, Prof. Ditchburn made opportunity in the midst of an active career as a physicist to shoulder the responsibilities of registrar of the School of Social Studies and to organise a great deal of social work through philanthropic channels. The influx of refugees into Eire during the last ten years much

increased the scope of this work. His return to England will be a most opportune accession of administrative and research experience at a time when post-war university re-organisation is just getting under way.

### University Grants Committee

IN a Parliamentary written reply on July 30, the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that the University Grants Committee ought to play a more positive part in the expansion and planned development of the universities of Britain, and accordingly it has been given the following new terms of reference :

"To inquire into the financial needs of university education in Great Britain; to advise the Government as to the application of any grants made by Parliament towards meeting them; to collect, examine, and make available information on matters relating to university education at home and abroad; and to assist, in consultation with the universities and other bodies concerned, the preparation and execution of such plans for the development of the universities as may from time to time be required in order to ensure that they are fully adequate to national needs".

### Tercentenary of Flamsteed

THE tercentenary of the birth of the Rev. John Flamsteed, first Astronomer Royal and rector of Burstow, Surrey, will be commemorated at a special evensong at 3.50 p.m. on Sunday, August 18, in Burstow Church. The present rector, the Rev. A. Hackford, will conduct the service, after which the Astronomer Royal, Sir H. Spencer Jones, will give an address on Flamsteed's work. Representatives of the Royal Astronomical Society and other bodies will be present. Flamsteed, who was born on August 19, 1646, at Denby near Derby, was made by Charles II "Our Astronomical Observer" in 1675, and Flamsteed House, at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, was built for his use. His salary was but small and he had to find his own instruments. His enthusiasm and industry, however, enabled him to overcome these and other difficulties, and he laid well and truly the foundation of the fame of the Observatory. In 1684 he had been given the living of Burstow, and at his death in 1719 he was buried in the chancel of the church. In 1887 the late J. J. Tustin erected the east window and a memorial tablet to his memory. The church is situated about three miles south-west of Horley, and the Reigate-Horley-East Grinstead bus, No. 424, gives a half-hourly service to within half a mile of it.

### Centenary of John Owens

THE *Manchester Guardian* of July 27 contained an appreciation of John Owens, the founder of Owens College, Manchester, now the University of Manchester, who died on July 29, 1846, at the age of fifty-five. Owens had been in business with his father as a furrier and a maker of hat linings, but had afterwards engaged in other business enterprises, and, being a bachelor of simple tastes and abstemious habits, had accumulated a considerable fortune which it is said he wished to leave to his closest friend, George Faulkner. But of the money Faulkner would have none; he prevailed upon Owens to make a will leaving his fortune for educational purposes. An institution was to be set up at or near Manchester for the instruction of young persons in such branches