

### Engineering at the City and Guilds College : Prof. E. F. D. Witchell

IN conferring the title of emeritus professor in mechanical engineering upon Edward Frank Dalby Witchell, the Senate of the University of London has signified its appreciation of a distinguished career in academic circles. His retirement severs a long and valued connexion with the University and with the City and Guilds College. After attending the City and Guilds College during 1898-1901 as a student in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Witchell joined the staff of the College and eventually was appointed assistant professor and reader. His election as a member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers and as president of the Association of University Teachers was followed by his appointment as professor in 1931, election as a fellow of the City and Guilds of London Institute in 1934 and appointment as deputy vice-chancellor of the University of London for 1945-46. His ability in debate and intimate knowledge of University procedure inevitably destined him to serve on the numerous academic boards, including the Board of the Faculty of Engineering, the Board of Studies in Civil and Mechanical Engineering and as its secretary for thirty-two years, the Academic Council and the Senate.

As a teacher, Witchell will long be remembered by many old students of the City and Guilds College for his clear and concise treatment of the subjects under discussion; his apparently effortless ability to explain fundamental principles, his fund of wit and sense of humour gave to his lectures a freshness that is rarely met in lecture theatres. It is among Old Centralians, perhaps, that his versatile qualities have been most freely displayed, and no small debt of gratitude is owed to him for the part he has taken in promoting social life between students, past and present, and inspiring the loyalty and devotion to the College that is characteristic of the Old Centralians.

### Division of Colloid Chemistry, American Chemical Society Prof. C. Edmund Marshall

PROF. C. EDMUND MARSHALL, professor of soils at the University of Missouri, has been elected chairman of the Division of Colloid Chemistry of the American Chemical Society, in succession to Dr. Geoffrey E. Cunningham of the Dollinger Corporation, Rochester, N.Y. Other new officers of the Division are: Dr. Robert D. Vold (vice-chairman), of the University of Southern California; Dr. W. O. Milligan (secretary-treasurer), of the Rice Institute, Houston, Texas; Dr. E. A. Hauser, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Dr. M. W. Tamele, of the Shell Development Company, Emeryville, Calif.; and Dr. J. W. Williams (chairman of the Symposium Committee), of the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Prof. Marshall was born at Bredbury, Cheshire, on January 9, 1903, graduated from the University of Manchester and received the degree of M.Sc. for work on colloid chemistry. He was awarded a three-year research scholarship by the Ministry of Agriculture, and spent two years investigating the chemistry of humus at Rothamsted Experimental Station. The following year was spent in Prof. C. Wiegner's laboratory at Zurich, studying colloid chemistry and mineralogy. In 1928, he was appointed assistant lecturer in agricultural chemistry at the University of Leeds, where he started research in the colloid chemistry and mineralogy of soils and clays, which

he has continued up to the present. In 1936, Dr. Marshall was invited to become visiting associate professor of soils at the University of Missouri; he decided to remain there, and in 1941 was appointed professor of soils. He was elected president of the Soil Science Society of America this year.

### Tycho Brahe Celebrations

THE University of Copenhagen celebrated the four hundredth anniversary on December 14 of the birth of Tycho Brahe (see *Nature*, December 14, p. 856), and honorary degrees were conferred on twelve astronomers from Denmark, Great Britain, Holland, Norway, Sweden, the United States and the U.S.S.R. The British representatives were Sir Harold Spencer Jones, Astronomer Royal, and Prof. F. J. M. Stratton, professor of astrophysics in the University of Cambridge.

### A Century of Chemistry in Britain

AS part of the centenary celebrations of the Chemical Society, an exhibition illustrating the achievements of British chemistry during the past century and the part which chemistry plays to-day in everyday life, organised by the Chemical Society and the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, is to be held at the Science Museum, South Kensington, during July and August 1947. The Chemical Society is preparing the first part of the exhibition, which is to be historical in character, illustrating the great advances that have taken place during the hundred years of the Society's existence. How great are those advances will be noted when it is realized that, at the foundation of the Society, Dalton's atomic theory was but thirty years old; and the study of organic chemistry was in its infancy. Each branch of chemistry is under the care of a panel of experts who are now engaged in preparing an account of the progress in the past hundred years which this exhibition serves to illustrate. The Department of Scientific and Industrial Research is preparing a modern section dealing with the applications of chemistry to everyday life. Between the two parts of the exhibition there will be a linking section which will explain the processes by which the chemical engineer turns raw materials into the products which are familiar in the day-to-day life of every citizen. This will lead on to sub-sections dealing with such themes as textiles, agriculture, homes and buildings, roads and transport, fuel and power, health and food. The Department is having the co-operation of the Agricultural Research Council, various research associations and other organisations in the preparation of these exhibits; and the Central Office of Information is to be responsible for the design and layout of this part of the exhibition.

### Aristotle's Views on Falling Bodies

ALVARO-ALBERTO has published an article (*An. Acad. Brasil. Ciéncias*, 18, No. 1, March 31, 1946) which emphasizes a misunderstanding regarding the teaching of Aristotle on the velocities attained by falling bodies of different masses. It is often assumed that he taught that the velocity was proportional to the weight of the body, and that Galileo was the first to show the falsity of this assumption. A letter from J. F. Harcastle which appeared in *Nature*, 92, 584, January 22, 1914, pointed out that Aristotle was referring to motion in a resisting medium, and that the velocity which he was considering was the