

methods of display intended to make their work more intelligible to the general public. Thus his appointment in 1914 as director of the Cambridge University Museum of Zoology was a natural one.

His appointment was immediately followed by the outbreak of war, and he spent the period until 1918 in work on malaria. On his return to Cambridge he completely reorganised the Zoology Museum, making it a well-designed teaching collection. At the same time he took some private pupils, who have since become distinguished zoologists, and gave many lectures, becoming University reader in vertebrates. But his activities in Cambridge soon widened out: he became a fellow and bursar of Trinity Hall, and when the accommodation of books and readers in the University library became an embarrassment to everyone, suggested that the only real solution was the radical one of moving the whole to a new and unencumbered site where it could be housed in a modern building designed for that purpose. Ultimately this plan was adopted, and Forster-Cooper, as chairman of the Buildings Syndicate, became responsible for its execution.

But his real interests remained in museum work, and in 1938 he was appointed director of the British Museum (Natural History). There he began to consider and design a new plan for the exhibition

galleries which would have made them far more valuable both to students and to the general public. But the advent of the War ended all possibility of putting these plans into effect. The whole staff of the Museum was devoted to packing up the vast collections and placing them in safety. For a long time Forster-Cooper actually lived in the Museum, which suffered much damage from bombs in 1940 and again in 1945. Thus the opportunity of which he would have made such good use came to him too late, and was immediately taken away.

Forster-Cooper had all the qualities of a great museum man. He was a good teacher, with many ideas about the exposition of facts and ideas in a museum. He had a very wide experience of the world, and of zoology. He had seen and considered critically very many great museums.

Most important of all was that he was a man of wide general culture, with a highly developed appreciation of pictures, prints and drawings. Indeed, he was himself an excellent draughtsman, who had painted good water-colours and etched some pleasant plates; and he could, with his own hands, carry out most museum operations.

He was a man of great personal charm, very modest and shy, unwilling to impose his own ideas on anyone.

D. M. S. WATSON

## NEWS and VIEWS

### Atomic Energy Control

A DISCUSSION of the present situation concerning the international control of atomic energy has recently been issued by the executive committee of the Association of Scientific Workers. The committee believes that on most of the issues concerned there is little difference between the points of view of the United States and the U.S.S.R., that "a start should be made by setting up an international control organ having powers on which there is immediate agreement", and that it would then be possible to find acceptable compromises on the remaining points of difference. It calls upon the British Government to make a more positive approach to the solution of these problems.

The area of agreement is stated to be as follows: "All countries are agreed on the urgent necessity of an international control scheme of some kind. All countries agree that when such a scheme is functioning no atomic weapons should be in the hands of any national authority. All agree that the international control authority should have its own rules of procedure and that there should be no right of veto in the day-to-day functioning of the authority. All agree that the international control authority should have its own inspection staff which should be chosen on an international principle and have full inspection rights in any establishment in any country concerned with obtaining atomic war materials and producing atomic materials and atomic energy. All agree that the international control authority should be empowered to conduct special investigation on cases when it is suspected that illicit material is being produced, and that it should be given facilities by the State concerned to conduct the necessary investigations. All agree that the international control authority must have the positive functions of operating research establishments staffed by its

own qualified international personnel so that it will keep abreast of the latest scientific developments in the field of atomic energy." Although the statement suggests lines of compromise on several contentious aspects of the problem, it does not attempt to show how the points of agreement could provide a practical basis for an international organ before the points of disagreement are resolved.

### Controlled Fast Neutron Chain Reaction

It has been announced that a "fast fission pile" is in operation at the Los Alamos Laboratory of the United States Atomic Energy Commission. Instead of using natural uranium, in which a chain reaction can be maintained only with the aid of a 'moderator' that brings the energies of most of the neutrons into the thermal region, this pile employs plutonium and has no moderator, the reaction being maintained (as in the atomic bomb) by fast neutrons. It may be explained that the possibility of controlling such a pile arises from a time lag between the fission process and the emission of the small but appreciable proportion of the neutrons that come from the radioactive products of fission. The pile will be a valuable source of fast neutrons for experimental purposes.

### Literature on Atomic Physics

IN the April-May issue of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* the editors present a new section which, it is intended, will contain information concerning articles and books of interest on atomic energy. The first contribution is a bibliography surveying the literature now available. M. C. Leikend, who is consultant in science on the staff of the Library of Congress, has compiled a bibliography which covers the period March 1, 1946-February 1, 1947, and which is printed, by permission of the Library of Congress, on pages 127-35 of the *Bulletin*. The