

ultimately found shelter in very limited quarters in the house of his grand-niece in Göttingen.

Planck was unpopular with the former German Government on account of his refusal to be associated with the movement for 'German physics' and on account of his admiration for the work of Einstein. Moreover, he appealed personally at the highest level for a relaxation of the persecution of Jewish men of science. A very gifted son, a Secretary of State to an earlier German Government, was executed for alleged complicity in the plot to overthrow the Nazi regime in the last stage of the War.

These experiences had greatly enfeebled Planck, when he was invited by the Royal Society to take part in the Newton celebrations last year. In spite of the anxiety of his relatives he insisted on undertaking the journey in order, as he said, to reopen the bridge which united the physicists of both countries. His old friends were pained to see his enfeeblement, but they will all be glad to know that he returned home refreshed in mind and body by the renewal of old friendships and by the hospitality so readily

offered. Of the latter aspect of his visit his own words were: "Ich lebe wie im Schlaraffenland".

One of the last letters he wrote was to friends in Britain on the anniversary of his visit, recalling happy memories of it. Before the letter could be posted he had a bad fall and sustained bruises and a slight fracture from which he did not recover.

H. T. FLINT

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Prof. J. N. Brønsted, professor of chemistry in the University of Copenhagen, on December 17.

Prof. A. N. Whitehead, O.M., F.R.S., professor of philosophy in Harvard University during 1924-37, on December 30, aged eighty-six.

ERRATUM.—In *Nature* of December 13, p. 821, the death was announced of Mr. S. A. Courtauld. This was incorrect; the reference should have been to Mr. S. Courtauld, a trustee of the National Gallery, who died on December 1 at the age of seventy-one.

NEWS and VIEWS

Social Studies in Manchester: Appointment of Prof. M. Polanyi, F.R.S.

PROF. MICHAEL POLANYI has been appointed professor of social studies in the University of Manchester in lieu of his present position as professor of physical chemistry. The change of duties will become effective after Easter of this year. Prof. Polanyi graduated in medicine in the University of Budapest. Later he was appointed professor of chemistry in the Technical High School, Berlin, and taught in the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, publishing much original work. In 1933 he accepted an invitation to become professor of physical chemistry in the University of Manchester, where he has conducted distinguished teaching and research, and has directed a stream of research workers in that subject. Prof. Polanyi's wide experience and range of interests have brought him closely into contact with investigators and teachers in social studies and in economics, and in recent years he has produced a number of papers on aspects of those subjects. These include volumes entitled "The Contempt of Freedom" and "Full Employment and Free Trade", together with a substantial number of essays in this field published in economic and other journals. In 1946 he accepted an invitation to deliver the Riddell Lectures in the University of Durham, his subject being "Science, Faith and Society". He has recently accepted an invitation to give the Gifford Lectures for 1949-50 in the University of Aberdeen.

University College, Exeter, and the Norman Lockyer Observatory

ARRANGEMENTS have now been completed by which the astronomical observatory on Salcombe Hill, Devon, will become "The Norman Lockyer Observatory of the University College of the South West of England, Exeter". The Observatory occupies a commanding site of about 44 acres above Sidmouth, at an altitude of 565 ft.; and since its foundation in 1912 it has been maintained through funds provided by a few generous donors as a non-profit making

corporation with articles of association approved by the Board of Trade. By the will of Lady Lockyer, who died in September 1943, some additional land, with her house and also her residuary estate, were bequeathed to the Corporation. These gifts brought the capital funds of the Observatory up to about £33,000 in March 1947, with an income therefrom of nearly £1,400 a year. The whole property is now being incorporated in the University College of the South West, with the buildings, telescopes and other equipment for astronomical research, under a scheme adopted by the Councils of the College and of the Observatory Corporation. The director (Mr. D. L. Edwards) and chief assistant will thus become attached to the staff of the College, and the registrar of the College will become secretary of the Observatory Corporation. Under the revised articles of association, the future Council of the Observatory Corporation will consist of not more than twenty persons nominated by the Council of the College and not more than five nominated by the Corporation. By this provision, leading British astronomers will still be able to ensure the promotion of the educational and research sides of astronomy, in which, because of lack of financial support, Great Britain has lagged behind other countries in many of the new developments.

The work of the Norman Lockyer Observatory hitherto has mainly dealt with stellar spectroscopy; but the erection of the Mond astrographic instrument has enabled a somewhat wider field of astrophysical research to be included. In all, sixty-one papers from the Observatory have been accepted by the Royal Astronomical Society, in addition to a number of contributions published elsewhere. At present the principal routine programmes of work deal with colour temperatures of stars, bright-line stars, spectrum variables and galactic clusters. Work on the last is at the moment in abeyance, owing to shortage of staff, and progress in the other programmes is retarded for the same reason. Minor programmes are also kept in reserve for use when conditions are not suitable for the main routine work.