NEWS and VIEWS

Sir Francis Darwin (1848-1925)

THE third son of Charles Darwin gave early evidence of a scientific bent. Born at Down a century ago, on August 16, 1848, he took his degree at Cambridge in 1870 with a first class in the Natural Sciences Tripos. After studying medicine at St. George's Hospital, London, and obtaining the Cambridge M.B. in 1875, he acted as his father's secretary for eight years. In 1884 he was appointed lecturer, and four years later reader, in botany at Cambridge. At that time plant physiology was beginning to supersede the study of systematic botanical description. Francis Darwin's class-book "The Practical Physiology of Plants" (1894) went into several editions, for it was the first book of its kind in Britain. His researches on growth curvatures in plants and on the control of water-loss by plants attracted considerable attention. He was a popular lecturer, being engagingly simple and direct. Though possessed of strong prejudices and inclined to be intolerant, his was a lovable personality, charming, kindly and humorous. He was an accomplished musician and devoted to dogs, which, unlike human beings, never bored him. Many honours came his way. Elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1882, he was foreign secretary during 1903–9 and vice-president in 1907. In the following year he became president of the British Association, and he was knighted in 1913. He died at Cambridge on September 19, 1925. It is appropriate that his best and best-known book should be the "Life and Letters of Charles Darwin" (1887).

Statistics of the Ministry of Labour and National Service

THE standing Interdepartmental Committee on Social and Economic Research was appointed in January 1947 to survey and advise upon research work in Government departments and in particular to bring to the notice of departments the potential value for research purposes of the material which they collect, and to suggest new methods and areas of collection. It has also to advise on how there could be made available to research workers information gathered for their own purposes by the departments which has potential value as material for research. The Committee has selected as the first major department for survey (London: H.M. Stationery Office. 9*d*. net) the Ministry of Labour and National Service, which has a tradition of co-operation with research workers. The first results of this survey have been published as a booklet which describes the development of the Ministry of Labour's Statistical Service and the information at present collected by the Ministry on employment and unemployment, wages, earnings, hours and industrial relations, retail prices and family budgets, the changes which have occurred in the form of collection and the effect upon the comparability of successive statistics. In addition to a list of published sources of information, there is included a subject index to published sources of Ministry of Labour statistics. The booklet is experimental in form; but it is hoped that it will prove of value to teachers and students in the universities as well as to other research workers, and criticism and suggestions for improvement will be welcomed by the Committee.

Marconi Transmitters for East Africa

A NEW system of short-wave radio communication is planned in East Africa, where a total of forty-eight Marconi short-wave transmitters are to be installed to provide a comprehensive communications network for ground-to-air and point-to-point communications for the rapidly expanding civil aviation services—both local and trunk routes—and for administrative, public and meteorological traffic. The new services, which will operate throughout the three territories of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, are required to meet the needs of post-war expansion and re-organisation of the East Africa Posts and Telegraphs Department's Services. Two of the latest types of Marconi transmitters have been chosen for this new service. They are Type *TGS*. 541—a 200-watt transmitter with a frequency range of 1·5–23 Mc./s., and Type *TGS*. 501—a 100-watt set covering a frequency range of 1·5–13 Mc./s. Both types of transmitter are compact, easily operated equipments designed for operation on radiotelephony or telegraphy. Special features include crystal-control with provision for the rapid selection of any one of six working frequencies—a particularly useful asset where a large volume of traffic is handled. Frequency tolerances are well within the very fine limits laid down by international regulations. Work has already begun at the Marconi Company's Chelmsford Works on the construction of the first of these transmitters which are to be installed at Mbeya Airfield, Tanganyika.

Quarterly Journal of Mechanics and Applied Mathematics

THIS new journal is intended to provide a medium for the publication of papers on classical mechanics and mathematical techniques. The first number, dated March 1948, which has recently been issued, contains papers by D. C. Pack, R. Hill, D. R. Hartree and S. Johnston, W. G. Bickley, S. Goldstein, A. D. Young, M. J. Lighthill, and Sir Geoffrey Taylor. Rather more than half of these papers deal with hydrodynamics and its applications to aerodynamics or internal ballistics; the others deal with elasticity or methods and results useful in computation. The editors are Prof. G. C. McVittie and Prof. V. C. A. Ferraro, assisted by an editorial board which includes most of the leading British applied mathematicians. The publishers are the Oxford University Press, and the subscription is £2 a year for the four numbers.

Earthquakes during June

DURING June there occurred at least nine world-shaking earthquakes and a great number of smaller ones. The greatest two of the month were that on June 28, which caused heavy casualties and severe property damage in and around Fukui, West Honshu, Japan (*Nature*, July 10, p. 57) and which gave ground amplitudes at Durham of 115μ, and that on June 30, which caused casualties and property damage on the island of Levkas and the nearby mainland of Greece, and gave ground amplitudes of 220μ at Kew. The other great shocks were on June 15 near the southern coast of Honshu, Japan; on June 18 in the Solomon Islands region; on June 21 in the Celebes Sea; on June 27 (2) off the northern coast of Honduras and south of the Alaska Peninsula; and on June 29 (2) in the Samoan Islands region and in Transcaucasia. An earthquake only slightly less intense occurred on June 13 from a focus the epicentre of which was near lat. 43° 31′ N., long. 12° 8′ E. This caused some property damage and at least one death at San