

## Electrical Engineering at Dundee :

Prof. E. G. Cullwick

DR. E. G. CULLWICK at present director of electrical research of the Defence Research Board, Ottawa, has been appointed to the newly instituted Watson-Watt professorship of electrical engineering at University College, Dundee. A native of Wolverhampton, Prof. Cullwick took the Mechanical Sciences Tripos at Cambridge, and after a subsequent period in industry with the British Thomson-Houston Co., Ltd., Rugby, and the Canadian General Electric Company, joined the staff of the Electrical Engineering Department of the University of British Columbia. He became head of this Department in 1937, but from 1942 served with the Royal Canadian Navy as director of electrical engineering. His return to academic work, and particularly to Great Britain, will give much satisfaction to those to whom his contributions to the teaching of electromagnetism have proved so helpful.

## Cacao Disease in the Gold Coast

THE Commission on Swollen Shoot Disease of Cacao (see *Nature* of October 30, p. 689) arrived in the Gold Coast at the end of October and left Accra on December 5. On December 3, it held a Press conference in Accra and the following statement was issued: "The Swollen Shoot Commission has now been at work for about six weeks. During that time it has examined a vast mass of evidence and has heard from representatives of all the groups of people concerned—farmers, scientists at the West African Cacao Research Institute, survey officers, and agricultural officers. . . . The undisputed fact is that swollen shoot is a contagious disease of the virus type. Drought, Akate, old age, lack of canopy and poor soils have nothing whatsoever to do with it. The virus causing this disease is present in all parts of a diseased tree, and once it has established itself it cannot be eliminated except by the destruction of the tree in which it lives. How then does a tree become infected? There is only one way in Nature whereby this can be done and that is by the feeding of an *infected* mealybug on a healthy tree. Not all mealybugs, of course, are infected. They can become infected *only by feeding* on a diseased tree, and before they can infect another tree they must move from the diseased tree to a healthy one. How then can such a disease be controlled? With this type of virus disease, the basic method of control is to remove all possible sources of infection. In the case of swollen shoot this means diseased cocoa trees, and in addition, certain wild forest trees which are known to carry swollen shoot infection, this being the only way in which healthy trees can be protected from infection. The Commission will include in its final report a discussion of means which may be of some use for the sanitation and rehabilitation of cocoa in the future, but it is certain that these measures can only be additional to the cutting out. . . . The Commission's gravest concern is with the cutting out programme itself. We have to stress that even this method can save the cocoa culture only if it is done accurately, thoroughly and continuously, and without delay. . . . The Commission has spent a long time at the Research Institute at Tafo and has studied very thoroughly all their investigations. We have a great appreciation for the splendid work being done and we strongly advise the cocoa farmers to have confidence in these scient-

ists, who are working solely in the interests of the cocoa farmers of the Gold Coast.—G. H. Berkeley, Walter Carter, E. Van Slogteren."

## International Institute of the Hylean Amazon

UNESCO's Hylean Amazon Project, since its inception two years ago, has been sustained by world-wide interest which reached its climax when delegates of interested nations agreed at Iquitos, Peru, last May that the International Institute of the Hylean Amazon should be established. Extending from the Andes to the Atlantic and from the River Orinoco to the Mountains of Bolivia, the Hylean Amazon—the vast wooded region of the Amazon River basin—is some seven million square kilometres in area. Except for a few towns and settlements, mainly along the river banks, the only inhabitants of this region are about three hundred thousand Indians, whose conditions of life in many cases are extremely primitive. The density of population of the region is one of the lowest in the world. The new Institute will study the problems of botany, zoology, physiology, agriculture, social sciences and education in relation to that area. The project for the creation of an international research institute in the Hylean Amazon has been inspired by the past history of the region. Since the discovery of Amazonia, it has been explored by scientific missions of many nationalities with the aim of drawing up its botanical and zoological inventory, of becoming acquainted with the state of social development and organisation of its native tribes, of determining the essential characteristics of its climate and soil, of carrying out archaeological excavations and finally of opening up the economic wealth and exploring the demographic possibilities of its vast area.

These long and difficult tasks have too often remained fruitless for want of a permanent centre or body to co-ordinate them, follow them up and pass them on to succeeding generations. Furthermore, the materials collected by various expeditions were often lost, and their reports, although still extremely valuable documents, are largely scattered and forgotten. One of the primary tasks of the Institute is to bring to life all that exists in archives, libraries and museums concerning Amazonia, and further to renew, with continuity and greater resources, the admirable efforts of the past. In addition to the seat of the Institute at Manaus, it is planned to establish research centres at the following places as soon as possible: Archidona (Ecuador), Belem do Para (Brazil), Iquitos (Peru), Riberalta (Bolivia), San Fernando de Atabapo (Venezuela) and Sibundoy (Colombia). It has been realized that it is not possible to project into the distant future a research programme for the Institute, except in broad outlines. Of immediate concern is the definition of the Institute's programme for its first year of operation, for which a budget of approximately 300,000 dollars has been provided.

## Child Development Study in London

It has long been felt by those concerned either with the health or with the education of children that a close study of growth and development, both physical and psychological, conducted on the same group of children in a parallel series of observations, would yield valuable basic material. In 1947, Dr. D. H. Geffen, medical officer of health of St. Pancras, and Prof. Alan Moncrieff, of the Institute of Child Health, University of London, placed before the governors of

the Foundling Hospital in London a scheme for utilizing their residential nursery, day nursery and nursery school at Coram Gardens for teaching and research purposes. It was also suggested that a maternity and child welfare centre might be started on the same site. The next development arose when the Central Council for Training in Child Care, concerned with the training of boarding-out officers and house mothers under the Children's Act, found a shortage of seniors who could take up posts of a supervisory character or as tutors in the various education schemes. The Institute of Education of the University of London and the Institute of Child Health therefore decided to put forward a plan for a joint training and research centre at the Foundling Hospital site. This was discussed with representatives of the Home Office, of the Ministry of Health and of the London County Council Public Health and Education Departments. Eventually a scheme was agreed, under which the financing of the teaching side would be undertaken by the Institute of Education and that of the research side shared between this Institute and the Institute of Child Health with the approval of the University of London authorities.

On the training side the first course will begin immediately. Provision has been made for the appointment of a senior tutor and a junior tutor and for visiting lecturers. Dr. Agatha Bowley has been appointed senior lecturer in child care and Miss J. E. Cass as tutor in child care. Members of the teaching staff of both Institutes will take part in the course. Miss Cass has also been appointed honorary educational supervisor to the day nursery on the Foundling Hospital site, so that there may be general co-operation with the staff in relation to the training of probationers for the National Nursery Certificate. On the research side, provision has been made for two educational research assistants, for a part-time medical assistant and for part-time assistance from the Child Guidance Clinic at the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street. Plans for a pilot survey are well advanced. In addition to detailed observations on children in the nurseries and nursery schools, it is planned to extend the investigation to babies in the same area who are not attending such institutions. In this way one of the objects of the research programme is to attempt to assess the educational values or disadvantages of the nursery or nursery school. Those concerned with the planning are endeavouring to take a long view, hoping to follow children through the nursery school to the primary school period and even eventually to adolescence in the youth centre activities in the Harmsworth Memorial Playground, also on the site of the original Foundling Hospital.

### Effect of the Severe Winter of 1946-47 on Bird Life

N. F. TICEHURST and P. H. T. Hartley (*British Birds*, 41, No. 11, November 1948) have examined 121 reports on the effects of the hard weather of early 1947 on bird life. February 1947 was the coldest month in Britain since 1895, and, in some parts of the country, temperatures were lower than any noted since records were begun in 1815. Many species of birds were greatly reduced in numbers; but one of the striking features of the collated reports is the lack of any consistency in the proportionate reduction of numbers of groups of allied or ecologically similar species. For example, in the Wirral peninsula tree-creepers were scarcely affected, though nuthatches

were much reduced; but on the Surrey-Sussex border tree-creepers suffered heavily and nuthatches not at all. In south-west Devon and in Cardigan, blackbirds suffered heavier reduction than song-thrushes; in the rest of the country blackbirds fared much better than song-thrushes. The diminutions of the stocks of the various species over the country as a whole shows few consistent trends, and probably the only general statements which can be made are that some specimens of most of the winter residents of Britain were found dead, there were relatively few reports of icing of plumage or feet—a cause of mortality frequently recorded in 1939-40—and that there were many reports of unusual shifts of birds in search of food.

### Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Bengal

At the hands of scholars of the new Dominion, Indian botany may <sup>now</sup> be said to be on its way and making good progress on a wide front. This is apparent from a survey of the contents of recent journals. The second volume of the new *Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Bengal* (April 1948) contains papers on cytology, genetics, comparative and developmental morphology, mycology and physiology. Thus the aim of the *Bulletin*, to publish original researches, is being fulfilled. This aim is in no sense marred by the fact that in this, as in other Indian botanical journals, plants of economic importance are often selected for special study; on the contrary, the indigenous and introduced crops, in their many aspects, afford materials of remarkable interest for the investigator; for example, mangoes and bananas among tropical fruits, rice among cereals, and jute among textiles. Papers relating to these crops appear in the current number, while a review of the Bignoniaceæ of India and Burma serves to remind us of the floristic wealth of this great sub-continent.

### Advisory Committee on Medical Nomenclature and Statistics

THE Registrar General announces that his Advisory Committee on Medical Nomenclature and Statistics, the function of which is to consider from the medical point of view and to advise upon questions affecting the International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries and Causes of Death, and any other matters concerning medical nomenclature or statistics which may be referred to the Committee, is constituted as follows: Sir Ernest Rock Carling (chairman); Sir Allen Daley, chairman of the Council of the Society of Medical Officers of Health; medical officer of health and school medical officer, London County Council; Prof. Ernest Finch, emeritus professor of surgery, University of Sheffield; Dr. F. H. K. Green, assistant secretary, Medical Research Council; Dr. C. F. Harris, dean of the Medical College, St. Bartholomew's Hospital; Prof. A. Bradford Hill, professor of medical statistics, University of London; Prof. A. J. Lewis, professor of psychiatry, University of London; Dr. A. Massey, chief medical officer, Ministry of National Insurance; Dr. P. L. McKinlay, superintendent of statistics, General Registry Office, Edinburgh; Prof. N. C. W. Nixon, professor of obstetrics and gynaecology, University of London; Dr. W. N. Pickles, medical officer of health, Aysgarth, Yorkshire; Dr. A. H. T. Robb-Smith, Nuffield reader in pathology, University of Oxford; Dr. Percy Stocks, chief medical statistician, General Register Office; Prof. R. E. Tunbridge, professor of medicine, University of Leeds; Sir Lionel Whitby, regius professor of physic, Department of Medicine, Univ-