

## 516 NEWS and VIEWS

## Physiology at King's College, Newcastle :

Prof. D. Burns

At the end of the present academic year, Prof. David Burns retires from the chair of physiology in the Medical School at King's College, Newcastle upon Tyne. In 1921, when Burns succeeded Menzies, the Department of Physiology was small but with a long and honourable record. It was founded with a lecturer in charge, in 1832 by a group of physicians and surgeons in Newcastle, and was the first department of physiology in England to be so designated. Sir Thomas Oliver was appointed first university professor of physiology in 1886. He was succeeded by Bainbridge in 1911. Burns inherited a department with only two assistants and the 'bulge' of students following the First World War. He leaves a large department, superbly housed, in the largest provincial medical school in England. Such changes take toll of the time and energies of academic staff. There was, too, a period of intense distraction in the 'thirties when the relationship of the Newcastle Medical School, and of Armstrong College, to the University of Durham came under close scrutiny. These periods of *Sturm und Drang* militated undoubtedly against intense prosecution of research. Burns early realized that teaching would have to take precedence. Yet the list of publications from his Department during these twenty-eight years is by no means unimpressive. In his later years, he became actively interested in the problems of physical fitness, a natural focusing of his life-long interest in social conditions and in youth movements, especially the Boy Scouts. In 1943, Newcastle honoured him by making him a justice of the peace. In this office Burns found once again an outlet for his interest in social welfare. It can truthfully be said that Burns is handing over to his successor a department in good heart, a solid foundation for a flourishing school of physiology.

216 Prof. A. A. Harper

DR. A. A. HARPER, who has been appointed to succeed Prof. D. Burns, is a graduate of the University of Aberdeen, where he first read for a degree in classics. After qualifying in medicine he filled the usual clinical appointments and then took up physiology, working first with the late Prof. McSwiney in Leeds and afterwards at St. Thomas's Hospital. Prof. Harper's interests are in the control of digestive secretion, and his work on secretin led in 1943 to the discovery with H. S. Raper of pancreozymin. By this time Harper had taken up an appointment as lecturer in human physiology in the University of Manchester and later he became reader there. At present he is studying the further purification of pancreozymin and also working on the control of gastric secretion. Prof. Harper is a most successful teacher, and his students and colleagues have not been slow to recognize this. The happy combination of teaching and research capabilities make it certain that he will be a stimulating influence in the Medical School at Newcastle.

## 616 Science Service : The Popular Exposition of Science

MR. WATSON DAVIS, the director of Science Service in Washington, has recently explained the origin of his organisation and how it is working to-day in the United States. In 1919, E. W. Scripps, the founder

of the famous group of newspapers that bears his name, began to believe that democracy would not develop unless it adopted a scientific approach to its problems. Two years later, in collaboration with Dr. W. E. Ritter, a biologist of the University of California, he founded Science Service, with trustees nominated by three scientific groups, the National Academy of Sciences, the National Research Council, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and two newspaper groups, the E. W. Scripps Estate and the journalistic profession.

Science Service was given a double task. It had to convince the American newspapers that science is news and then it had to distribute and sell the popular science material it produced. To-day its news service supplies more than two hundred newspapers and other publications, with a readership of about ten million people, while for eighteen years it has been broadcasting a weekly programme called "Adventures in Science" over the Columbia Broadcasting System. Its weekly magazine, *Science News Letter*, has a circulation of more than fifty thousand, and a monthly magazine, *Chemistry*, is also widely circulated. Another service to its members is called "Things of Science". Under this scheme each month ten thousand members of Science Service receive little boxes containing a number of specimens, a booklet of explanations, museum legend cards and directions for a number of experiments.

Science Service also acts as sponsor to the movement known as Science Clubs of America, to which many of the science clubs in secondary schools are affiliated; these are able to obtain materials free of charge from Science Service. Other ways in which Science Service helps in the popularization of science is by aiding research and distributing the results, by making its news services available to foreign countries and by helping Unesco. Full particulars of Science Service may be obtained from 1719 N. Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

## Commonwealth and United Kingdom Universities Interchange Scheme

THE British Council has introduced a scheme under which travel grants are awarded to facilitate interchange of university teachers and scholars between the Commonwealth countries and the United Kingdom. Thirty-nine such awards have been made for the current year. The scheme has been established as the result of discussions which took place at the first post-war congress of universities of the Commonwealth, held last year at Oxford. The grants, which may be made to assist travel to or from the United Kingdom and Commonwealth countries, are awarded for two purposes. Grants are made to university teachers on study leave and to postgraduate research workers, holding research grants, who intend to work for at least six months in another university. Priority is given to the first of these categories. Grants are also made to enable distinguished scholars and scientific men to accept invitations for short visits to other universities. The scheme is administered by the British Council in collaboration with the Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth. The first awards were made in March this year to enable Lord Eustace Percy, Sir Raymond Priestley and Prof. J. Dover Wilson to take part in the celebrations which marked the granting of a charter to the University of Natal. The awards for the year include grants to four other distinguished scholars from the United Kingdom, three of whom will go to Canada and