

physical laboratories and of those with whom his wider interests have brought him into contact.

Engineering at University College, Cardiff: Prof. W. N. Thomas, C.B.E.

PROF. W. NORMAN THOMAS, who retires in September, has occupied the chair of engineering at University College, Cardiff, for twenty-two years and has twice been dean of the Faculty of Science. During this period the Department of Engineering has developed very considerably, and several new laboratories have been equipped. It was due to his interest and initiative that degree courses in building were instituted at Cardiff, and the University of Wales was the first to offer a degree in this subject. He is well known as the author of a standard textbook on "Surveying" and has published many papers, including those on the effect of surface finish on the fatigue strength of steel, phenomena connected with the freezing of building materials, etc.

When the Civil Defence Research Committee was formed in 1939, Prof. Thomas was appointed a member; immediately war was declared, he was seconded from Cardiff as a scientific adviser and later became deputy chief adviser in the Research and Experiments Department of the Ministry of Home Security. In connexion with this work he was flown to Moscow in 1941; and, after the atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he was sent to Japan with the honorary rank of group-captain in the Royal Air Force and as the leader of a party to report upon the effects. In recognition of his war work, he was awarded the C.B.E. in 1946 and received also the American Medal of Freedom. Prof. Thomas has wide interests and has served on many committees, including the Building Research Board of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, the Scientific Advisory Council of the Ministry of Works, the Architectural Science Board of the Royal Institute of British Architects, etc. On several occasions Prof. Thomas was president of the University College Engineering Society. He was at all times readily accessible to students, by whom he was regarded both as professor and friend, and his retirement will be regretted by staff and students alike.

Dr. C. Gurney

DR. C. GURNEY has been appointed to succeed Prof. Thomas at Cardiff. After taking an engineering degree at Cardiff in 1932, Dr. Gurney spent some years in the aircraft industry, and in 1937 joined the scientific staff of the Royal Aircraft Establishment, where he was engaged on research into aircraft structures and into the properties of materials. In 1948 he was appointed university lecturer in engineering at Cambridge. Dr. Gurney is the author of scientific papers on a wide range of subjects, including theory of elasticity, thermodynamics and the properties of materials. Particularly noteworthy are his papers in collaboration with Mr. S. Pearson on the mechanical properties of glass and his recent papers on surface forces in liquids and solids. Dr. Gurney possesses a keen scientific insight combined with the practical ability of the engineer. He joins University College, Cardiff, at the beginning of a period of great expansion of facilities and amenities, and it is expected that he will take a prominent part in the development of education in the applied sciences in South Wales.

Protection of Laboratory Animals

A FIRST draft for a model "Act for the Protection of Laboratory Animals" has been circulated by the Universities' Federation for Animal Welfare for the purpose of eliciting constructive criticism and enabling a revised draft to be eventually offered to foreign inquirers who may wish to profit by British experience in the regulation of experiments on animals. The proposals are based on British practice; but they differ from it in important respects. Thus, the Act would apply not only to animals under experiment but also to 'biomedical manufactures', that is, the manufacture of sera, vaccines and the like *in vivo*, and to the management and supply of laboratory animals. Unpopular species would be protected equally with popular species. The Act would permit the use of stray animals subject to safeguards, and also operations, carried out under full anaesthesia without recovery, for the purpose of acquiring manipulative skill. On the other hand, it would not permit any experiment which involves substantial suffering of more than moderate duration or severe suffering of more than brief duration, or extreme suffering. The obvious difficulties of definition which these expressions involve are left to be solved by discretion, analogy and precedent, with the guidance of examples given in a schedule which is obviously intended only as a basis for discussion. In accordance with British practice as disclosed in the annual reports of the Home Office, no operation (defined as "the infliction of a trauma more serious than that caused by skilful subcutaneous venesection or the insertion of a sharp hypodermic needle") would be permitted without anaesthesia. A clause of the draft Act is devoted to an elaboration of the meaning of anaesthesia.

The day-to-day administration of the Act would be directed by a scientific, veterinary and humanitarian board of control having inspectors under it. Licences would be granted by the board after inquiry into the applicants' scientific ability and general character, and would be graded in accordance with the severity of the procedures authorized; a licence would not cover operations with or without recovery, electric stimulation, or demonstrations to students, unless a specific clause to that effect were added. There would be a subordinate grade of licences for laboratory technicians, who would be permitted to carry out prescribed procedures under the experimenters to whom they were attached. Discipline would be exercised on behalf of the Minister of the Interior by the board of control, and there would be a right of appeal to a tribunal. The draft, which runs to ten pages of typed foolscap, can be obtained from the Universities' Federation for Animal Welfare, 284 Regent's Park Road, Finchley, London, N.3, which would welcome constructive criticism.

Conference in New Zealand of the Universities of the British Commonwealth

AT the sixth quinquennial Congress of Universities of the Commonwealth, which was attended by 350 delegates of a hundred university institutions at Oxford in 1948, it was decided that in addition to such conferences there should be held each year a small meeting of representative heads of universities or senior academic officers from each part of the British Commonwealth to discuss matters of academic policy on which closer consultation is necessary than can be given in large congresses held at long intervals.