

Prof. E. T. Copson

PROF. EDWARD T. COPSON, who succeeds Prof. Turnbull, was educated at St. John's College, Oxford, whence he proceeded in 1922 after graduation to a post as lecturer in the Mathematics Department of the University of Edinburgh. With the exception of a short period when he was at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, he has worked continuously in Scotland, first at Edinburgh, later as head of the Applied Mathematics Section in the United College at St. Andrews and later still as professor of mathematics in University College, Dundee. Prof. Copson is interested in pure mathematics and particularly in those branches of analysis and partial differential equations which have direct bearing upon mathematical physics. He has written and published many original papers on these subjects, and his text-book upon the complex variable (Oxford University Press) has a wide circulation both in Great Britain and in the United States. In collaboration with Prof. B. Bevan Baker, he wrote a distinguished memoir on Huygens's Principle that also has received wide recognition. It deals with the geometrical structure and generation of waves from a mathematical point of view that has considerable physical applications. During the Second World War Prof. Copson made useful contributions to technical problems raised by the Admiralty, in which he exhibited the practical application of higher mathematical analysis. He has a high reputation as an attractive lecturer and teacher.

'Airmet' Petition

THE launching of a petition for the restoration of the 'Airmet' weather broadcasts of the B.B.C. was announced on October 5. The petition is being organised by the magazine *Weather* on behalf of the Royal Meteorological Society, which is acting as a focus for all those bodies which found the 'Airmet' service of value. 'Airmet' was started in 1932 by the Aviation Division of the Automobile Association, primarily for the use of aircraft owner-pilots, and was taken over by the Meteorological Office three years later. Apart from the break for security reasons during the War, the service continued until March 1950, when the Copenhagen Broadcasting Plan was introduced, under which no provision had been made for 'Airmet'. Speakers from the aviation, agricultural, educational and sporting worlds at a meeting on October 5 made it clear that 'Airmet' had latterly served a very wide public in a way which could not possibly be met by the normal weather forecasts issued by the B.B.C. The chief features of 'Airmet' were the up-to-the-minute nature of the weather reports, the greater details given in the forecasts, the continuous availability of the service throughout daylight hours and the intimate relationship it provided between the forecaster and the public. Such a service can only be provided by radio, and a telecommunications expert pointed out that the petition might fail unless constructive suggestions were made for overcoming the wave-length difficulties. The most obvious solution seemed to be to use one of the Third Programme wave-lengths until 6 p.m., and the question probably resolved itself into which was of greater importance—the provision of an extra channel for the B.B.C. Overseas Service (such appears to be the present use of the Third Programme wave-length prior to 6 p.m.) or the restoration of 'Airmet'. People signing the petition are asked to state their

main reason for requiring 'Airmet'; an analysis of the information thus made available might well prove to be of considerable economic and sociological interest and suggest lines along which a renewed service could be enhanced in value. Copies of the petition may be obtained from *Weather* ('Airmet' Petition), 49 Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7.

The Upper Atmosphere

A RECENT publication, "La haute atmosphère", by R. A. Boutet (Publication No. 38; pp. 121; Paris: Office National d'Études et de Recherches aéronautiques, 1950), reviews the knowledge of the upper atmosphere and the means whereby this knowledge has been obtained and may be increased. Reproduced photographically from typescript, it contains sections devoted to the atmospheric composition, thermodynamics (temperature and pressure), optical sounding by observation of natural scattered light, sounding by a searchlight beam, the intensity and spectrum of the light of the night sky, acoustic sounding, biological relations (effect of altitude on human physiology, influence of ultra-violet light, animal and vegetable life, and bird migrations), the winds, cosmic radiation, meteors and their trails, relationship of the upper atmosphere with perturbations of the lower atmosphere and of the ionosphere, with vulcanism and with solar changes, and the atmospheric tides. The volume contains much that repays reading; but the scope is vast, and the author, clearly not a specialist in all the fields covered in the volume, occasionally errs. The book ends with a five-page bibliography, marred by some wrong attributions of authorship and by many instances of quotation of author and title only, without indication of place and date of publication.

Museum of Applied Science of Victoria

THE report for 1948-49 of the Museum of Applied Science of Victoria (pp. 36. Melbourne: National Museums of Victoria, 1950) contains an unusual item of information in that it records some astronomical telescope demonstrations. These are given in conjunction with the Astronomical Society of Victoria to selected parties on three nights in each month. It is stated that the demonstrations are well attended and that there is a waiting list of applications. An 8-inch telescope is used, and the demonstrator is granted an honorarium for his services. The same report also states that a new Section of Preventive Medicine has been established in the Museum. The programme of exhibits includes nutrition, avoidance of infection, occupational hazards, fallacious beliefs, etc. The subject is approached from the health and safety angle rather than the pathological, thereby minimizing the risk of creating a state of morbid anxiety in susceptible individuals.

New Type of Automatic Aperiodic Balance

THE May issue of the "Nivoc Supplement", published by W. and J. George and Becker, Ltd., is a special balance issue and reviews the wide range of balances, including the new 'Nivoc' automatic aperiodic balance and weights, produced by this well-known firm of laboratory furnishers and manufacturers of scientific equipment. Incorporated in the automatic aperiodic balance is an entirely new principle of weight selection, in addition to the attractive and useful features of the older 'Nivoc' aperiodic balance. Weight error is reduced to a minimum, and the time of each weight determination