NEWS and VIEWS

Prof. E. D. Adrian, O.M., F.R.S.: President of the Royal Society

THE election of Prof. E. D. Adrian to the presidency of the Royal Society will bring great pleasure throughout the world of science, both in this further homage to the distinction of his work and also in that the Royal Society will have those personal qualities which have made his recent ambassadorial work for Unesco and as Foreign Secretary to the Royal Society so conspicuously successful. Prof. Adrian's work has had a profound effect on the course of biological science in the last two decades. His early training with Keith Lucas and in clinical neurology up to 1918 equipped him to make full use of the opportunities to re-investigate much of nervous function presented by the advent of the valve amplifier, which enables the messages passing in nerve trunks to be tapped and recorded with instruments rapid enough to follow them but too insensitive to be used without amplification. In 1926 his discovery with Zotterman of the rhythmic discharge of impulses by a single sense organ in muscle was rapidly followed by many observations showing this to be a general principle of signalling used throughout the nervous system, in motor as well as sensory nerves. With many pupils and collaborators in the following years, many of the outstanding uncertainties of sensory function were made plain. He then turned his attention to the electrical changes of the brain and, following Berger's early work on these, laid the foundation of electro-encephalography, which has since become an important new branch of neurology. In recent years his work has been on olfaction and has given us objective facts on which further understanding of this most baffling of the sense organs can be built.

Prof. Adrian's work has been characterized by simplicity in conception, going straight to the fundamental point where the new techniques could supply the missing links in the older knowledge. This has led him far afield in comparative neurology, from the optic ganglion of the water beetle to the auditory nerve of the alligator: the cortex of the pony, ape, or himself have all provided material for his experiments. His work has mapped out many new fields of experiment which have become active fields of research all over the world. In spite of the extreme difficulty of many of the techniques he has used, his experiments are all done by his own hands, which have a skill in operation that is deceptive in the speed with which a preparation is made. His work, presented either in papers or lectures, has a clarity and simplicity that reveal a mind under the sternest logical discipline and with complete freedom from obliquity in thought; and whether he speaks to a learned society or to a class of medical students, his audience are made to understand matters they thought too difficult for them.

Electrical Engineering at University College, London: Prof. F. Brailsford

DR. F. BRAILSFORD has been appointed as from January 1, 1951, to the second chair of electrical engineering, tenable at University College, London, with special responsibility for heavy-current work. He has a very wide experience in industrial research, having been a member of the staff of the Research Department, Metropolitan-Vickers, Ltd., Manchester, since 1929. In recent years he has given close attention to magnetic materials, and he is particularly well known both in Great Britain and in the United States for his important contributions in that field of study. Dr. Brailsford's little book on "Magnetic Materials", published in 1948 as one of "Methuen's Monographs", is an authoritative work. In the academic sphere Dr. Brailsford has had experience as a part-time teacher both at the University of Manchester and at the Manchester College of Technology. He took a London B.Sc.(Eng.) external degree with first-class honours in 1927 and Ph.D.(Eng.) in 1939. As a full member of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, he has been awarded the Kelvin Premium and the Mather Premium of that Institution for scientific papers presented to it.

British Railways Research Organization

THE Railway Executive has decided to integrate the research facilities of the different regions of British Railways into a single Research Department. This is in accordance with the recommendation of a committee set up by the British Transport Commission under the chairmanship of Sir William Stanier. The Department will be under the control of a Director of Research responsible directly to Sir Eustace Missenden, chairman of the Railway Executive. It will have seven divisions, each under the immediate control of a superintendent. The divisions will be: (1) Chemistry, embracing existing laboratories in each region; these laboratories will continue to be concerned with work arising in the regions, but major researches of a chemical nature will be allocated to whichever laboratory is most suitable (laboratories are situated at Ashford, Crewe, Darlington, Derby, Doncaster, Glasgow, Horwich, Stonebridge Park, Stratford, Swindon and Wimbledon; headquarters in London); (2) Engineering; (3) Metallurgy; (4) Protective Coatings; (5) Physics; (6) Textiles; (7) Operational Research (headquarters in London). Divisions 2–6 will be at Derby, where the necessary laboratory facilities and staff already exist; there will also be a subsidiary engineering laboratory at Ashford. The Research Department will establish a central library and information centre.

The appointments have already been announced of Mr. T. M. Herbert, formerly research manager, L.M.S., to be director of research, and of Mr. E. Morgan to be assistant director. The following appointments as superintendents of the various divisions of the new Department have been made: Mr. T. Baldwin (senior assistant (engineering), Scientific Research Department, Derby), Engineering Division (Derby); Mr. T. H. Turner (chief chemist and metallurgist, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Department, Doncaster), Metallurgy Division (Derby); Mr. T. A. Eames (senior physicist, Scientific Research Department, Derby), Physics Division (Derby); Mr. F. Fancutt (paint technologist, Scientific Research Department, Derby), Chemistry Division (Euston); Mr. C. G. Winson (textile technologist, Scientific Research Department, Derby), Textile Division (Derby); Mr. M. G. Bennett (manager, General Research Department, Euston), Operational Research Division (Euston).

International Film Coupon Scheme

A SCHEME has been organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization which will enable soft currency countries to purchase educational, scientific and cultural films from hard-currency areas, and will facilitate purchase