

NEWS and VIEWS

Forestry in the University of Edinburgh :

Prof. M. L. Anderson

DR. M. L. ANDERSON has been appointed to the chair of forestry in the University of Edinburgh recently vacated by Prof. E. P. Stebbing. Dr. Anderson, who already holds a doctorate of the University, brings to his new post a wide experience of British forestry, having served first in the Forestry Commission, both as a district officer and as a research officer, and then in Eire, where he was director of forestry for the period 1940-46 and had to deal with the practical and administrative problems connected with the severe war-time shortage of timber and fuel. In December 1946 he joined the Imperial Forestry Institute at Oxford, where he was responsible for instruction and research in forestry mensuration and British forestry practice. Dr. Anderson has a wide reputation as a silviculturist with special knowledge of the native hardwoods of Britain, particularly the oaks, to which he has devoted a great deal of outdoor and literary research; his most recent publication is a very detailed study of the status of the sessile oak in the New Forest, and his alleged partiality for this species has long been the subject of friendly chaff. Another pronounced preference shown in his work and writings is for an uneven-aged structure of woods and group regeneration, and he has done much to collect experimental data bearing on the matter. His recent publication on the choice of species in relation to site factors is an important contribution to the literature of the subject and reveals a wide knowledge of this leading aspect of the vast afforestation task in Great Britain. His translation of Tamm's work on "Northern Coniferous Forest Soils" illustrates another task he has frequently undertaken, that of making available to the English-speaking forester the published material and views of leading foreign workers on subjects of importance to Great Britain. Dr. Anderson is one of the few British foresters for whom Swedish, and even Russian, present no serious difficulty. As a contribution towards the investigation of another of the major current forestry problems in Britain, during his time at Oxford Dr. Anderson undertook a study of the relation between the State and private forestry in the Western democracies. Dr. Anderson's appointment at Edinburgh is a very appropriate recognition of the large share he has taken in the advancement of knowledge and thought in the field of forestry, and the effects on the coming generation of his teaching and his example in his new post are likely to be far-reaching.

Education in the University of Edinburgh :

Sir Godfrey Thomson

SIR GODFREY THOMSON, who retired this year from the chair of education in the University of Edinburgh and from the directorship of Moray House Training College, has made a distinctive contribution to the theory and practice of mental testing. On the theoretical side, he has been a critic of the bold generalizations of Spearman and others, and his work on sampling and the influence of selection upon the factors in a correlational matrix stresses the need for caution in this field. On the practical side, Sir Godfrey has made Moray House the major British centre for the provision of intelligence tests in schools. He has also been concerned with population trends and a possible decline in our national intelligence.

His Galton Lecture in 1946 dealt with this topic. He was chairman of the committee which carried out the Scottish Mental Survey of 1947, and is continuing his researches on the data which that survey provided. Sir Godfrey has also achieved notable success as a teacher, and the contribution made to educational and psychological research by his pupils is very great. There are at present no less than ten professors of education or psychology who have studied under him.

Prof. J. G. Pilley

PROF. JOHN G. PILLEY, who succeeds Sir Godfrey Thomson, is a Londoner who graduated in natural science in the University of Oxford in 1922. After three years as a research physicist, he became a university lecturer in education at Liverpool for a year and then, from 1926, at Bristol. In 1937 he went to the United States by invitation of the Rockefeller Trustees and Columbia University to study the teaching in American schools and to help in formulating proposals for the reform of the teaching of science. On the outbreak of the Second World War he was prevailed upon to take charge of the Department of Education at Wellesley College, Massachusetts, the post he now relinquishes. Though a man of science, and a successful teacher of science, it is in the philosophy of education that Prof. Pilley's interest is centred. He stands by the values embodied in the educational tradition of classical liberalism against every form of facile modernism. He has made his mark in America as a vigorous critic of the tendency to make education 'scientific', holding that this means, in effect, to anchor it to values that are shiftily pragmatic, and often ephemeral. His published writings, though slight as yet and mostly topical, have a quality and direction which suggest that he has an important contribution to make to educational theory; perhaps, in particular, to the solution of that most urgent contemporary problem, the effective integration of science in the theory and practice of a liberal education.

F. M. Balfour (1851-82)

BORN in Edinburgh a century ago, on November 10, 1851, Francis Maitland Balfour, a younger brother of the statesman Arthur James Balfour, was one of the most distinguished of British zoologists and embryologists of his time. At the age of twenty-two he did original work at Cambridge on obscure points in the development of the chick, and at the Zoological Station in Naples, under Anton Dohrn, he elucidated the embryonic history of the Elasmobranchs, which was then little understood. This latter research, published in the *Quarterly Journal of Microscopical Science* (1873-75), won him a fellowship of Trinity College, Cambridge, and a lectureship on animal morphology in the University. His classical "Treatise on Comparative Embryology" (two vols., 1880-81), a masterly digest of the previous knowledge on the subject and embodying his own original contributions, was instantly recognized by his fellow scientific workers. In the graphic words of his teacher, Michael Foster, it "brushed away many cobwebs and mooted points with a firm but courteous sweep", and it laid the foundation of the modern study of descriptive embryology. Balfour's numerous honours included the fellowship of the Royal Society in 1878, one of the Society's Royal Medals three years later, and the professorship of animal morphology in the University of Cambridge, which was created for