

his early years he wrote some excellent light satirical and scientific verse. He married in 1914 Miss Teresa Hurley and had four sons, the loss of one of whom, killed in 1945 while serving in the Royal Navy, he felt very deeply. During the past few years his health deteriorated, though he continued his many activities to the end of 1951. Attempting to resume work after Easter, he collapsed and died on April 18 while lecturing on electromagnetic induction to a large class.

His death leaves a gap in the life of his College and in the scientific life of Ireland which will remain unfilled for a long time. THOMAS E. NEVIN

Mr. Charles McDermid

CHARLES MCDERMID, who was born in Darlington in 1868 and died at Bexhill-on-Sea on May 7, was associated with the mining and metallurgical industries for more than fifty years. In his early years he was secretary to the late Sir David Dale, who was chairman of the North Eastern Railway Company and of a number of coal, iron and steel companies. Later he went to London as assistant secretary of the Iron and Steel Institute and in 1900 was appointed secretary of the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy. He was largely responsible for the growth both in numbers and prestige of that Institution.

In 1903 a representative meeting was held at the Mansion House to inaugurate a proposal for a memorial to the late Sir Henry Bessemer. Mr. McDermid became honorary secretary to that committee, and it was largely due to his personal efforts that funds were provided to build the Bessemer Laboratory at the Royal School of Mines. A strong liaison has always existed between the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy and the Royal School of Mines, and for many years Mr. McDermid represented the Institution on the governing body of the Imperial College, in the founding of which he had also taken an active part.

In 1920 he was invited to become secretary of the Institution of Mining Engineers, the previous headquarters of which had been in Newcastle upon Tyne, and he continued to hold these two secretaryships until he retired in June 1939. On the outbreak of war, however, he returned to the Institution of Mining Engineers and guided it through the difficult war years.

One of his greatest achievements was the major part he played in the organization of the Empire Mining Congress, the object of which was to bring together, triennially, representative mining engineers, metallurgists and economic geologists to discuss problems common to their relative Dominions and Colonies. The first Congress, held in London in 1924, was followed by meetings in Canada, South Africa and London again. He strongly urged the view that the British Empire and the United States should collaborate as closely as possible to preserve the peace of the world, and to compile a complete record of the mineral resources of these two nations for use in the event of a further conflict.

Charles McDermid travelled widely, and wherever he went he made and retained friends. His honesty of purpose, his kindness of heart and his interest in young engineers endeared him to all who came into contact with him. His death will be a sad blow to a host of friends throughout the world, both in distant cities and in the lonely outposts where mining men carry out their professional duties.

J. A. S. RITSON

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Prof. John Dewey, emeritus professor of philosophy in Columbia University, New York, on June 1, aged ninety-two.

Sir James Irvine, K.B.E., F.R.S., principal and vice-chancellor of the University of St. Andrews, on June 12, aged seventy-five.

NEWS and VIEWS

Linnean Gold Medal: Mr. I. H. Burkill

THE presentation of the Linnean Gold Medal for 1952 to Mr. I. H. Burkill, at the anniversary meeting of the Linnean Society of London on May 24, was an overdue recognition of the valuable work accomplished in a long life by this still active botanist. Since 1900 he has been connected with the botany and botanical products of tropical Asia; during 1912-25 he was director of the Botanic Gardens, Singapore, in which post he succeeded Mr. H. N. Ridley. After his retirement he continued his botanical studies and (in part with the late Sir David Prain) specialized, though by no means exclusively, on the genus *Dioscorea*. During 1937-44 he was botanical secretary to the Linnean Society.

Burkill's published work is not only considerable in quantity and varied in subject-matter but also of a high quality. His "Dictionary of the Economic Products of the Malay Peninsula" (Crown Agents for the Colonies, 2 vols., pp. 2402; 1935) is one of the most useful books of reference not only to the economic plants and other products of the Malay Peninsula but also to tropical economic botany in general. Many of the articles, arranged alphabetically according to subject, make excellent reading. Space

will allow no more than a mention of Burkill's monographic researches on *Dioscorea*. These are being continued. In Singapore, he was interested in problems of insect pollination, on which he published a series of papers. His work on the yams led him to an investigation of the structure and life-history of the black bryony and several important accounts of this plant were the result. Many of Burkill's papers naturally dealt with plants of tropical Asia and were published in various journals in Britain and other countries. The many botanists who have received help from I. H. Burkill are gratified that he has been awarded the highest honour of the Linnean Society, and all his friends wish him health and strength to continue his researches on plants of the tropical and temperate regions.

National Research Council of Canada:

Dr. C. J. Mackenzie, C.M.G., F.R.S.

DR. C. J. MACKENZIE has resigned from the presidency of the National Research Council of Canada to become chairman of Atomic Energy of Canada, Ltd., and is succeeded by Dr. E. W. R. Steacie (see p. 1049). Dr. Mackenzie is a graduate in engineering of Dalhousie and Harvard Universities, and as a