

NEWS and VIEWS

Secretaryship of the Smithsonian Institution :

Dr. A. Wetmore

DR. A. WETMORE, who is retiring from the secretaryship of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., started his scientific career in the Kansas Museum. In 1910 he joined the Biological Survey as assistant biologist, and in 1925 was appointed assistant secretary to the United States National Museum—the Smithsonian Institution—becoming secretary nineteen years later. While with the Biological Survey, Dr. Wetmore made important investigations on the food and feeding habits of various water-birds and also did some work on lead poisoning in ducks. He has made a special study of fossil birds of North America—indeed, he is a leading authority—and in 1940 published a check-list of the species described from that part of the world. In 1930 he brought out a classification of birds of the world which he has revised from time to time, and this classification has been adopted by many authors. He is also the author of a number of papers on anatomy and osteology. Dr. Wetmore makes a point of spending part of each year in the field studying and collecting birds which, in spite of his onerous official duties, he has always found time to work out. Outside the United States these trips have included islands in the West Indies, Venezuela, Central America, and several of the South American Republics. During 1926–29 he was president of the American Ornithologists' Union, and in 1950 he presided at the International Ornithological Congress at Uppsala. He is an honorary member of many foreign societies. In addition to his scientific papers, Dr. Wetmore published in 1930 a small work on bird migration, and in 1937 was part author of the National Geographic Society's "Book of Birds".

Dr. L. Carmichael

DR. WETMORE will be succeeded in January next year by Dr. Leonard Carmichael, who is at present president of Tufts College, Medford and Boston, Mass. Dr. Carmichael graduated in psychology from Tufts College in 1921 and then took his Ph.D. at Harvard University. He later taught at Princeton and Brown Universities, and also at the University of Rochester, where he was dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science and professor of psychology. During the Second World War Dr. Carmichael was director of the National Roster of the Scientific and Specialized Personnel, the agency which listed and mobilized scientific workers in the United States for the war effort; he is at present a member of a number of committees dealing with various aspects of government affairs, and in particular is director of a survey on the impact of Federal policy on the economy of New England, which has been sponsored by the National Planning Association. Dr. Carmichael was elected to the presidency of Tufts College in 1938, and has been active in the expansion and changes that have taken place in the College since that date. Scientific research has received considerable impetus, and, in particular, the medical and dental schools of the College have been considerably expanded. These aspects of Dr. Carmichael's administration reflect his continued personal interest in research work, which is in the field of sensory psychology and physiology. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences.

Mathematics at Sheffield : Dr. D. G. Northcott

DR. DOUGLAS GEOFFREY NORTHCOTT, who succeeds Prof. A. G. Walker in the chair of mathematics in the University of Sheffield (see *Nature*, March 15, p. 444), is outstanding among the younger Cambridge geometers. Born in 1916, he went up from Christ's Hospital to St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1935, with an open scholarship in mathematics, and was a wrangler in 1937, obtaining a distinction in Part III of the Mathematical Tripos in 1938. He then began research in analysis under Prof. G. H. Hardy, showing such promise that he was awarded a Commonwealth Fund fellowship to Princeton in June 1939. Soon after the outbreak of war, however, he enlisted in the Army as a gunner, and was sent to the Far East. He was taken prisoner after the fall of Singapore. In 1946 he returned to Cambridge to continue his mathematical research, and at the beginning of the next academic year he was at length able to take up his Princeton fellowship. While in the United States he was elected to a research fellowship in St. John's College, Cambridge, and soon after his return to England in 1949 he was appointed a University assistant lecturer at Cambridge, becoming a full University lecturer in 1951. His first published paper was on abstract Tauberian theorems; but at Princeton, where he worked under Prof. E. Artin, his interest shifted to modern algebra and its applications to the general problems of algebraic geometry, on which he has written a number of papers, printed in the *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philosophical Society* and elsewhere. The geometry school at Cambridge, under Prof. W. V. D. Hodge, will greatly miss Dr. Northcott's help and inspiration; it will be widely hoped that his new responsibilities will not slacken his mathematical development and achievement, already so distinguished.

Technical Education in Great Britain

THE forty-third annual conference of the Association of Technical Institutions was held in London during May 30–June 2. In his presidential address, Mr. H. S. Barlow, of the South-East Technical College and School of Art, discussed the recent Government economies in education and stated that in time these are bound to affect the quality of technical studies in Great Britain; the university and technical college students of the future are the primary and secondary school students of to-day. In discussing higher technological education, on behalf of his Association, Mr. Barlow pressed the Ministry of Education to declare its policy arising out of the White Paper on higher technological education which was issued in September 1951. Mr. Barlow welcomed the recent announcement about the provision of National Certificates in commerce and also directed attention to the reports of the various educational teams which have visited the United States of America under the aegis of the Anglo-American Productivity Council. He believes that the real difficulty in the development of technology in Great Britain lies in the fact that, whereas in the United States most of the best people from the high schools enter industry, most of the best pupils in Britain enter professions. The bias of general education in Britain tends to direct able schoolboys away from employment in industry. "A change of attitude is needed in the schools as