NEWS and VIEWS

Agricultural Botany at Reading: Prof. W. B. Brierley

Prof. William B. Brierley, who retires from the chair of agricultural botany in the University of Reading in September, was educated at the University of Manchester and in 1912 was appointed to the staff of the Department of Botany there. In 1915 he went to Kew as joint head of the newly established Pathological Laboratory, and in 1918 to Rothamsted as the first head of the Department of Plant Pathology which, during his period, developed from a small, bare room into a notable centre of plant disease research. In 1932 he succeeded Prof. John Percival at Reading. His personal investigations have been in the fields of phytopathology and microbiology, where his interests and guiding influence have made themselves felt throughout the world: his paper on an albino *Botrytis* in the *Transactions of the Royal Society* is a classic. In Reading he has built up an honours school in the sciences that together constitute the field of agricultural botany, which has sent research workers and teachers to all parts of the world. For a quarter of a century Brierley was honorary editor of the *Annals of Applied Biology*, a task which he carried out with unremitting care and scientific integrity. He is an honorary member of the Association of Applied Biologists and a freeman of the American Phytopathological Society. A welcome visitor to European and American centres of botanical research, and a prolific correspondent, his contacts in many lands have given him a world-wide reputation in the field of applied botany.

Prof. D. W. Goodall

Dr. David W. Goodall, reader in botany in the University College of the Gold Coast, who succeeds Prof. Brierley, graduated at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, and worked for some years under Prof. F. G. Gregory on problems of plant development and nutrition. In collaboration with Prof. Gregory he published a valuable book on the chemical composition of plants as an index of their nutritional status. For two years he was in the Colonial Agricultural Service, seconded to the West African Cacao Research Institute, where he worked on physiological problems in the cacao plant. In 1948 he was appointed senior lecturer in botany in the University of Melbourne, where he became especially interested in statistical ecology, and he has developed this interest further in relation to the classification of types of tropical vegetation since his return to the Gold Coast.

National Research Council of Canada: Mr. B. G. Ballard, O.B.E.

Mr. B. G. Ballard, director of the Division of Radio and Electrical Engineering of the National Research Council of Canada, has been appointed to the additional post of vice-president (scientific), in succession to Dr. E. W. R. Steacie, the present president of the Council (see *Nature*, **169**, 1049; 1952). Mr. Ballard graduated in 1924 from Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, and afterwards was on the Westinghouse staff for five years working on the development of railway electrification. He was appointed to the Division of Physics of the National Research Council in 1930, and during the following ten years he gradually built up the Electrical Engineering Section. This work became extremely important during the Second World War, when Mr. Ballard's efforts included the development of minesweepers and other means of protecting ships against enemy magnetic mines. The equipment was used on both coasts as well as on the high seas, and his work was recognized by the award of the O.B.E. In 1946 the Electrical Engineering Section was amalgamated with the Radio Branch of the Division of Physics and Electrical Engineering, and Mr. Ballard was made assistant director of the Division. With the subsequent expansion of work a separate Division of Radio and Electrical Engineering was established in 1948, and Mr. Ballard was appointed its director. In 1949 he was awarded the Ross Medal of the Engineering Institute of Canada for a publication called "Recent Canadian Radar".

Sir Jack Drummond Memorial Fund

Though the raising of funds for a fellowship in memory of the late Sir Jack Drummond has not yet been terminated, sufficient money has already been accumulated for an award to be made available as from October 1. The fellowship will be worth £900 a year, tenable in the first instance for one year, and will be for research on nutrition, with special emphasis on human nutrition, to be conducted in, or in association with, a university department or research institute of similar standing. The award may be made to a comparatively young scientific worker provided he has reached a stage at which he can undertake independent work. Further information can be obtained from Dr. B. Ifor Evans, Provost of University College, Gower Street, London, W.C.1.

New Building for the Radio Research Station

On May 10, Dr. R. L. Smith-Rose, director of radio research in the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, cut the first sod on the site of a new building being erected at the Radio Research Station, Ditton Park, Slough. This occasion marks another step in the Department's post-war plan for a considerable extension in the programme of research conducted under the advice of the Radio Research Board. The site is in the grounds of the Admiralty Compass Observatory at Ditton Park, where nearly 100 acres have been available for field experimental work for many years past. In addition, the Ministry of Works has purchased another 100 acres of the neighbouring farm. This additional land has been acquired mainly to ensure that the whole site is kept free from undesirable electrical interference with the radio research work. A very small portion of it may be used for further experimental work; but apart from this, the additional land will continue to be available to the farmer. The building has been designed by the architects of the Ministry of Works specifically to meet the requirements of the Radio Research Station. A two-story administrative block together with the workshops, stores, dining-room and all general services are concentrated at one end of the building. The scientific and technical laboratories are contained in a single-story building with a main block and four spurs, the ends of which open directly on to the field, which is regarded, for radio experiments, as a continuation of the laboratory working-space. Every effort is being made to restrict the metalwork installed in the field so that the minimum of disturbance is caused to experimental work. In order to reduce to the minimum the radio interference from the ignition systems of motor traffic,