

Those who knew him and whom he stimulated will never forget the slightly quizzical look over the half-lenses of his spectacles as he discussed the merit of some particular series of observations. Shortly before he died, he wrote in a letter: "I am getting very old and decrepit, and though I am still trying to do a little work it is becoming more and more of a labour".

Perhaps he was physically decrepit; but intellectually he was unimpaired. At the age of eighty-one he had shown neither any sign of reduced interest in scientific work nor any tendency to lower the standards which had guided him through a career of meticulously accurate observation and single-minded purpose.

S. ZUCKERMAN

## NEWS and VIEWS

### Physical and Inorganic Chemistry at Belfast:

Dr. C. Kemball

DR. CHARLES KEMBALL, who has been appointed to the chair of physical and inorganic chemistry in The Queen's University of Belfast, in succession to Prof. A. R. Ubbelohde (see *Nature*, April 17, p. 710), is a Fellow of Trinity College and demonstrator in physical chemistry in the University of Cambridge. Educated at Edinburgh Academy and Trinity College, Cambridge, he later became associated with Sir Eric Rideal in the Department of Colloid Science at Cambridge, first in research for the Ministry of Supply and afterwards in more academic studies. Here the pattern of his later work took shape, and his early studies of the surface chemistry of mercury and the thermodynamics of adsorption and monolayers fostered an interest in chemisorption and surface catalysis which has culminated in his well-known studies of the deuteration of hydrides at metal surfaces. Using the mass spectrograph, Dr. Kemball has thrown light on the fundamental aspects of surface reactions, and his papers show him to be a master of clear exposition. During 1946-47 he was awarded a Commonwealth Fellowship and worked in the United States with Sir Hugh Taylor at Princeton University; on his return to Cambridge he continued his research in the Department of Colloid Science. In 1949 he moved to the Department of Physical Chemistry as demonstrator and also became junior bursar of Trinity College. As a teacher Dr. Kemball is well liked by his students and, though his departure is a great loss to chemistry at Cambridge, he carries with him the best wishes of his colleagues for success in his new work.

### Automatic Control and Computing at the National Physical Laboratory: Mr. R. H. Tizard

A NEW Division at the National Physical Laboratory, which has been formed by the amalgamation of the Electronics and the Control Mechanisms Sections, is to be called the Control Mechanisms and Electronics Division. The field to be covered by the new Division is the automatic control of industrial, administrative and experimental operations and the development of techniques and equipment for data processing and computation. An industrial example of such mechanisms is the automatic control of machines producing precision components in large quantities. Not only are the operations speeded up but also personnel can be released from the boredom of repetitive work. It is hoped that this trend will not be confined to the factory floor but that many routine office operations will also be carried out by suitable machines. The new Division is represented on a small group formed to study this subject. This group also includes representatives from the Organization and Methods Division of the Treasury and from the Ministry of National Insurance. The new

Division is developing automatic or semi-automatic equipment to digest test records and similar material and produce it in the form of graphs or typescript ready for immediate use. Many of the techniques employed are electronic in the sense that thermionic valves are used, but the terms of reference exclude radio and acoustic applications. Thus the Control Mechanisms and Electronics Division is interested in the application of all forms of light electro-mechanical devices to special problems. Mr. R. H. Tizard, of the Metrology Division of the Laboratory, has been appointed officer-in-charge of the new Division.

### Liaison Officers at the National Physical Laboratory: E. I. Brimelow and A. J. Garratt, M.B.E.

THE application by British industry of results of research from the National Physical Laboratory is fostered by direct contact between the research workers at the Laboratory and individuals in industry, as well as by contributions to the scientific and technical press. It is, however, felt that much more could be done in the way of bridging the gap between the research laboratory and industry. To meet this need E. I. Brimelow and A. J. Garratt have been appointed liaison officers to work with industry. Mr. Garratt is a physicist and an honours graduate of the University of London. He was in the Civil Service from 1940 until 1951, first with the Ministry of Supply (Armament Research Establishment) and later with the Festival of Britain Office as staff physicist. More recently, he has held an appointment in industry and is a scientific adviser to the B.B.C. Television Service. Mr. E. I. Brimelow is a metallurgical engineer and an honours graduate of the University of Liverpool. He was for eight years from 1936 engaged in research at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, on materials for use in aircraft. After two years in industry as a metallurgist and research and development manager, he joined in 1949 the Chief Scientific Adviser's Division of the Ministry of Works, where he remained until transferred to the Building Research Station (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research) in 1950. He has also served on various technical committees of the British Standards Institution and on advisory committees of the Ministry of Supply.

### Sir Richard Owen (1804-92)

THE first anatomist of his age and one of the greatest of all times, Sir Richard Owen was born at Lancaster one hundred and fifty years ago, on July 20, 1804. He studied anatomy at Edinburgh under John Barclay, worked as prosector with John Abernethy at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, and at the age of twenty-two became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, in the neighbourhood of which he set up practice. He was soon to become one of the most distinguished truants from medical practice, and it was at the College that