

## NEWS and VIEWS

James Cook Medal of the Royal Society of New South Wales :

Sir David Rivett, K.C.M.G., F.R.S.

THE Royal Society of New South Wales has awarded the James Cook Medal for 1953 to Sir David Rivett. The presentation was made by the president of the Society, Prof. R. S. Nyholm, of the N.S.W. University of Technology and professor-elect of chemistry in University College, London. Prof. Nyholm remarked that Sir David Rivett, after graduating at the University of Melbourne, proceeded in 1907 as a Rhodes Scholar to Oxford. At Oxford, and later at the Nobel Institute, Stockholm, he carried out research in physical chemistry. He returned to Australia as lecturer in chemistry at the University of Melbourne in 1911, where he succeeded Sir David Orme Masson in the chair of chemistry in 1924. His main research interests were in the field of heterogeneous equilibria, to which he made many major contributions. Rivett had frequently stressed the importance of scientific research in the development of Australian primary and secondary industries. It was not surprising, therefore, that when the Institute of Science and Industry was reconstituted in 1926 as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, the Commonwealth Government appointed him as the chief executive officer and deputy-chairman. The success of the Council (now the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization) has been due, in a large measure, to Rivett's vision and leadership. Many difficulties were encountered in the formative years through Federal and State jealousies, impatience of politicians expecting quick results, and the often niggardly provision of money by Governments. Rivett overcame these difficulties by his persuasiveness in negotiation, courageous public utterances and his high personal and scientific integrity. The growth of fundamental research work in the Council was constantly encouraged by Rivett and, by the time he retired from direct work with the Council in 1949, fundamental studies occupied a major part of its activities. Rivett's leadership in science has been recognized by the conferring of a knighthood in 1936 and election to fellowship of the Royal Society in 1941. He was president of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science during 1936-39 and president of the Society of Chemical Industry of Great Britain in 1950. The James Cook Medal is awarded annually "for outstanding contributions to Science and Human Welfare in and for the Southern Hemisphere".

#### Indian Independence Day Decorations

AMONG decorations awarded by the President of India on Independence Day were the following :

The Bharat Ratna to Sir C. V. Raman, F.R.S., director of the Raman Research Institute, Bangalore.

The Padma Vibhushan Pehela Varg (first class) to Dr. S. Bose (physicist) and Dr. Z. Hussain (educationist).

The Padma Vibhushan Dusra Varg (second class) to Dr. H. J. Bhabha, F.R.S., director of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay ; Sir Shanti S. Bhatnagar, F.R.S., secretary to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Scientific Research and director of Scientific and Industrial Research, Government of India ; and Sir K. S. Krishnan,

F.R.S., director of the National Physical Laboratory of India, New Delhi.

#### Agriculture at Reading :

Mr. A. N. Duckham, C.B.E.

THE appointment of Mr. A. N. Duckham to the chair of agriculture at Reading in succession to Prof. H. G. Sanders (see *Nature*, April 10, p. 662) will be warmly welcomed. From the Agricultural VI at Oundle he went in 1922 to Cambridge, where he took the Natural Science Tripos and the diploma in agriculture. In the latter he obtained the very rare 'distinction', and an essay based on his thesis work on baby beef was awarded the silver medal for research by the Royal Agricultural Society of England. From 1927 onwards he was concerned mostly with pigs at Cambridge (where with Mr. H. R. Davidson he started and ran the East Anglian pig recording scheme), Belfast and Aberdeen, and in 1935 he became the research officer of the Bacon Development Board. In addition, he carried through two special assignments with conspicuous success: a survey of the economics of grass drying for the Empire Marketing Board, and the preparation of an account of animal industry in the British Empire which involved much travel. War brought service with the Ministry of Food as chairman of that Ministry's agricultural committees and collaboration with Sir Jack Drummond on dietary problems in Great Britain and other countries. He attended the Hot Springs Conference in 1942 and has continued as agricultural adviser to the United Kingdom delegation to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization. In 1945 he was appointed agricultural attaché at Washington, where he was extremely successful. After his return to become head of the General Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, he produced a monograph on American agriculture which is held in very high esteem. The University of Reading will gain one whose knowledge of agriculture is almost world wide, and whose interests also include painting and music.

#### Bernard Price Institute of Geophysical Research, Johannesburg :

Prof. A. L. Hales

THE University of the Witwatersrand has appointed Prof. A. L. Hales to succeed Dr. B. F. J. Schonland as director of the Bernard Price Institute of Geophysical Research, Johannesburg, when the latter leaves on October 1 of this year to take up his new position in Britain as assistant director of the Atomic Energy Research Establishment, Harwell. Prof. Hales, who at present occupies the chair of applied mathematics in the University of Cape Town, took his M.Sc. degree at the University and then proceeded to Cambridge, where he studied under Sir Harold Jeffreys. His first university appointments were in the Departments of Mathematics and of Applied Mathematics at the University of the Witwatersrand. After war service, including geophysical work in the Middle East theatre, he served on the staff of the Bernard Price Institute during 1945-49 before proceeding to Cape Town. Prof. Hales has made a number of important contributions to geophysical subjects connected with the crustal structure of the earth and the theory of mountain building. Some years ago he carried out a gravity survey of southern Africa in association with Dr. D. I. Gough.