

NEWS and VIEWS

Zoology at Bedford College:

Prof. H. Munro Fox, F.R.S.

PROF. H. MUNRO FOX, who is just retiring from the professorship of zoology in the University of London at Bedford College, has occupied this chair since 1941; previously he had been Mason professor of zoology in the University of Birmingham from 1927 until 1941. After graduating in zoology from the University of Cambridge he joined the staff of the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, in 1913, and after five years of war service returned there in 1919. Afterwards he was lecturer in biology at the School of Medicine, Cairo, during 1919-23. He then returned to Cambridge as a Fellow of his old college, Gonville and Caius, and also held the Balfour Studentship during 1924-27. During this period he organized and led a zoological expedition to the Suez Canal.

Prof. Fox's earlier investigations were in the field of marine biology and while in Cairo he studied the reproductive cycle of *Centrechinus setosus*, which, in the Red Sea, shows a well-marked lunar rhythm. The observations on this sea-urchin and other animals and plants showing supposed lunar periodicities were summarized in his book "Selene, or Sex and the Moon". His main interests, however, have been in the field of experimental zoology and for many years he has specialized in the study of animal pigments, more particularly the respiratory pigments of invertebrates. His researches and many publications in this field and also on respiratory movements in Polychaeta, Insecta and more recently *Daphnia*, either alone or in collaboration with his students, have opened up a very wide field of research. Prof. Fox has been the editor of *Biological Reviews* since 1926 and has taken a very active part in the promotion of international relationships among biologists. After the Second World War he visited various European universities on behalf of the Royal Society, and helped in the re-establishment of the International Union of Biological Sciences, and after being secretary of the Union for some years was president during 1950-53. He also served for five years on the Advisory Council of the Department for Scientific and Industrial Research. In 1953 he was appointed Fullerian professor of physiology in the Royal Institution.

Chemical Pathology at St. Mary's Hospital Medical School, London: Prof. A. Neuberger, F.R.S.

DR. A. NEUBERGER, of the National Institute for Medical Research, has been appointed to a University chair of chemical pathology tenable at St. Mary's Hospital Medical School, London. Dr. Neuberger, who is forty-six years of age, holds the degree of M.D. (Würzburg) and Ph.D. (London). He held a Beit Memorial Fellowship during 1936-40 and carried out research work at University College Hospital Medical School, London, until 1939. He continued his researches in the Biochemistry Department of the University of Cambridge until 1942 and has since been a member of the scientific staff at the National Institute for Medical Research. In 1945 he was adviser to the Medical Directorate, G.H.Q., Delhi. He was awarded the Julius Mickle Fellowship of the University of London in 1946. He has been a member of the editorial board of the *Biochemical Journal* since 1947 and its chairman since 1952. Dr. Neuberger has

worked on a wide range of topics in the chemistry and biochemistry of amino-acids and proteins. His earlier researches were concerned with the use of dissociation constants for structural diagnosis in the amino-acid and protein field; this method was later used by him in a study of the structure of penicillin. In the amino-acid field he has been concerned with stereochemistry, in particular that of hydroxyproline, and with metabolic and nutritional aspects. He is an expert on biochemical genetics and has a special interest in the metabolic abnormality known as alcaptonuria. Recently, he has become interested in the problem of porphyrin biogenesis and has made important contributions to our knowledge of congenital porphyria. He is also engaged in the study of the biosynthesis and metabolism of collagen.

Committee of Public Accounts:

Research Expenditure

THE Committee of Public Accounts for the session 1947-48 recommended that the expenditure on the Vote for the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, among others, should be covered by statutory authority other than the annual Appropriation Act, and, in evidence before the Committee in the following session, the Treasury promised to take the first convenient opportunity to embody the functions of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research in a statute. No such opportunity, in the Treasury view, has yet arisen; and the Committee, in its third report for the session 1953-54 (pp. 44. London: H.M.S.O., 1954. 1s. 6d. net), expresses the opinion that, in view of the years that have elapsed since the Committee of Public Accounts first recommended legislation, and the expansion of the Department's expenditure during that period, the necessary Bill should be prepared at once, ready for immediate introduction when any opportunity presents itself. In commenting on expenditure, estimated at £213,000, on the construction of a new fishery research vessel for the Torry Research Station of the Department, the Committee points out that five other departments or grant-aided bodies are engaged on fishery research and have provided themselves with a total of twelve research vessels for various purposes, but that it was not clear how the activities of these departments and bodies and the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research are co-ordinated. The Committee is not satisfied that there is no overlap of functions and recommends further inquiry by the Treasury. There is also a comment on the cost of construction of the Mechanical Engineering Research Station at East Kilbride, for which originally £1,000,000 was provided in the 1949-50 estimates, increased to £1.5 million, provisional in 1950-51 and 1951-52, reduced to £1,264,600 in 1952-53 and increased to £2 million in 1953-54, which has now been set as an upper limit. The Committee is satisfied that the Treasury exercised close control over the constituent parts of schemes of this kind, but, though critical of the way in which estimates and ideas developed as the work proceeded, the Treasury made no comment on what may well have been the more important factor in a time of rising costs—the effect of Government retrenchment and the consequent delay in executing the scheme.

University Grants

WITHOUT advancing any fresh reasons in its third report for the session 1953-54, the Committee of Public Accounts again presses for the inspection of