In the sessions devoted to the health aspects of the large-scale use of atomic energy, it was demonstrated that in atomic energy installations the plant personnel need suffer no serious exposure to radiation. In normal operating conditions exposure can be kept down to a small fraction of the maximum permissible limit, and even in the case of reactor accidents exposure can normally be adequately controlled.

A problem of greater concern is that of the possible spread of radioactive materials over wide regions, so that large populations might be subjected to risk. The problem is not yet of a magnitude to constitute a serious hazard; but it is important that there be available as soon as possible basic data on the uptake of various radioactive substances in plant, fish and animal forms. Over the past few years much information has been obtained in the United States, but not all has been readily available. It was, however, presented in a series of papers in the last session of the biological and medical meetings, which will provide most valuable reference material.

OBITUARY

Prof. Wilfred Smith

WILFRED SMITH, John Rankin professor of geography in the University of Liverpool, died suddenly while preparing to attend a university function on September 27 at the age of fifty-two. Prof. Smith had been closely associated with the University of Liverpool all his life. He entered as an undergraduate and remained as a postgraduate research worker, lecturer, senior lecturer, professor of geography, and since 1953 Dean of the Faculty of Arts.

Wilfred Smith belonged to that distinguished band of students that gathered around the late Prof. P. M. Roxby, the first holder of the John Rankin chair at Liverpool. The impress of the great teacher was clearly seen in everything Smith wrote about and

lectured upon. He began his life-long interest in the location of industry with an important study of the iron and coal resources of China—a country in which Roxby had developed a special interest. In later years, and more particularly in view of the disturbed conditions in the Far East, Prof. Smith concentrated his attention on the homeland, and in 1949 there appeared the standard work on the location of industry in Britain under the title of "The Economic Geography of Great Britain". This work well illustrates the author's technique. It shows him to be a meticulous and painstaking worker with a passion for fact and, particularly, for pattern in fact. His references were always abundant and exact, and his writing precise and direct. This work makes, in fact, a new approach to economic geography in the Roxby tradition—the industrial landscape seen as an expression of historical as well as of physical factors.

In later years Prof. Smith directed the attention of his students more and more towards the economic geography of Merseyside, and the visit of the British Association to Liverpool in 1953 provided the opportunity for the publication of "A Scientific Study of Merseyside", edited by Prof. Smith and to which he himself made a most valuable contribution.

He was one of those modest men who gave practically all his time to academic work; he seldom rested. When not engaged in research, he was busy as an administrator, or actively engaged in teaching. At the time of his death he was president of the Institute of British Geographers, which now includes within its membership practically all teachers of geography in the British universities. In spite of physical handicaps he succeeded in travelling widely, particularly in western and southern Europe. He will be greatly missed by his professional colleagues in every university, for he never spared himself in furthering the interests of his subject; and in particular by his own university, to which he was deeply devoted and to which he had given a lifetime's distinguished service in so many capacities.

E. G. BOWEN

NEWS and VIEWS

Embryology at the Carnegie Institution of Washington: Dr. G. W. Corner, For.Mem.R.S.

DR. GEORGE W. CORNER will retire on January 1 from his post as director of the Department of Embryology of the Carnegie Institution of Washington and will be succeeded by Prof. J. D. Ebert, professor of zoology in Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Dr. Corner was elected this year a foreign member of the Royal Society, and a note was published then on his work and activities (*Nature*, May 14, p. 838).

Prof. J. D. Ebert

PROF. JAMES D. EBERT, who is not yet thirty-four, graduated in 1942 from Washington and Jefferson College, Washington, Penn., and then spent nearly four years on active duty as an officer in the United States Naval Reserve. During 1949–50 he held an Adam T. Bruce fellowship in biology at Johns Hopkins University, gaining his Ph.D. degree, then spent a year as an instructor in biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and in 1951 joined the Department of Zoology of Indiana

University, to set up a programme of research and advanced teaching in experimental embryology. Prof. Ebert's research work has been directed toward an understanding of the mechanism of synthesis and interaction of tissue-specific proteins in development. He has employed the techniques of immunochemistry to throw light on the processes involved in the formation and localization of the contractile proteins, actin and myosin, in the developing heart, and recently he has made an analysis of the metabolism of the heart-forming regions of the early embryo, paying special attention to the mitochondria and their role in fibrogenesis. Since 1952 he has combined the classical methods of experimental embryology—transplantation, organ culture, etc.—with radiobiological techniques in an investigation of the growth-regulating mechanisms of the chick embryo, and these experiments suggest that, at the outset, growing organs can utilize specific macromolecules almost intact without breaking them down into simpler building blocks. The Department of Embryology of the Carnegie Institution of Washington is situated in Baltimore, Maryland, and is well known