

## NEWS and VIEWS

## Physics at Newcastle upon Tyne:

Prof. S. K. Runcorn

DR. S. K. RUNCORN has been appointed professor of physics in King's College, Newcastle (University of Durham). He was educated at King George V School, Southport, and entered Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, in 1941. He took the Mechanical Sciences Tripos in 1943 and later was awarded the John Winbolt Prize in engineering. During 1943-46 he worked in the Radar Research and Development Establishment of the Ministry of Supply at Malvern, particularly in the field of servomechanisms. He was then appointed assistant lecturer in physics in the University of Manchester and became lecturer in 1948. There, with several younger colleagues, he was mainly concerned with the first systematic study of the variation of the geomagnetic field below the Earth's surface. This work was carried out in coal mines down to a depth of 4,000 ft. His results show that the field increased downwards in a way which was in agreement with the hypothesis that the origin of the Earth's field lies in the deep interior of the Earth: thus excluding the 'bulk' theory initiated by Schuster and H. A. Wilson and recently further discussed by Blakett. In 1948 he was elected a Fellow of Gonville and Caius College and in 1949 became assistant director of research in the Department of Geodesy and Geophysics, University of Cambridge. Together with a group of colleagues he has been very active in the field of rock magnetism, studying both igneous and sedimentary rocks. This work has resulted in new evidence for reversals of the geomagnetic field and for polar wandering. To test the latter hypothesis, he has collected rocks in the United States of America. He has also made both observational and theoretical contributions to the understanding of the secular variation of the Earth's magnetic field and the origin of the Earth's general field. Under his stimulation a group of physicists has made important contributions to various aspects of the physical problems involved in this study: thus Dr. Hide has made some very interesting experimental investigations of the effect of rotation on convective systems. The results are of great interest, particularly in relation to meteorology. Other such work has been concerned with the electric conductivity and temperature of the Earth's mantle. Dr. Runcorn spent the summers of 1952 and 1953 as a research geophysicist in the University of California at Los Angeles.

## Metallurgy at University College, Swansea:

Prof. A. R. E. Singer

As announced some time ago, the Steel Company of Wales and Messrs. Richard Thomas and Baldwins, Ltd., have together made a gift totalling £100,000 for developments in metallurgy at University College, Swansea. It is intended that these developments shall provide special facilities for the scientific study of casting, deformation, welding and other fabrication processes. This extension involves a type of physical metallurgy which can be called 'fabrication metallurgy', and it will be a special line of research and teaching within the existing Department of Metallurgy; the work will be directed by an additional professor.

Dr. A. R. E. Singer, senior lecturer and acting head of the Department of Industrial Metallurgy

of the University of Birmingham, has been appointed to the newly created chair. Dr. Singer graduated with first-class honours at the University of Birmingham in 1938, and took his Ph.D. degree in 1946. During 1938-43 he worked in the Metals Division of Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd., and was at first concerned with research and development in copper and brass, and then in the manufacture of aluminium alloy castings and wrought products. Until 1944 he was development engineer with Birmetals, Ltd., and engaged in establishing methods for the large-scale manufacture of wrought magnesium products, after which he returned to the University of Birmingham as head of a research team examining the welding of aluminium alloys. In 1946 he was appointed to the teaching staff and became responsible for designing, equipping and eventually managing the new Aitchison Laboratories. He is particularly interested in the principles of technical control in metallurgical manufacture and published a paper on this subject in the *Journal of the Institute of Metals* in 1953. His research publications have included work on the cracking of aluminium-base alloys, and special features concerning the plastic deformation of metals.

## Birmingham College of Technology:

Mr. James Wilson

MR. JAMES WILSON is leaving the Birmingham College of Technology, where he has been principal for the past ten years, for the post of director of education and training of the British Motor Corporation. He went to Birmingham by way of the University of Glasgow and Coventry Technical College, and during his time at Birmingham he has seen the development of all the departments of the College cope with the greatly increased demands of this great industrial area. In addition to the problems of increasing numbers in higher level courses, provision has been made in a variety of subjects for special and postgraduate courses, an example of work of great and immediate value to people already in industry. Provision has also been made for 'sandwich courses', and there is a substantial and growing amount of research in most of the departments of the College. There has also been notable growth of studies in industrial administration. In the past few years the Birmingham Education Authority has been developing a very large extensions scheme which involves the Colleges of Technology, Art and Commerce, and it is certain that Mr. Wilson and his colleagues will have found their greater material facilities both an inspiration and the occasion for a great deal of planning. Last November H.M. the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh inaugurated the new buildings and inspected those parts of the new buildings already finished. The College of Technology obtains considerable increased accommodation in these parts, and when the whole provision is available, Birmingham will possess one of the largest technological institutions in Britain. Mr. Wilson's new post is a sign of the times; but though technological education in his College will be well aware of its loss, it is nevertheless the case that such work as he is to do within industry will greatly help to make the best use of the education and training acquired in the technical colleges.

Dr. P. F. R. Venables

DR. P. F. R. VENABLES, who succeeds Mr. Wilson at Birmingham, went from Southend to the Royal Technical College, Salford, in 1947, and since then