

a catalytic process. He found, first, that the molybdenum and tungsten sulphide catalysts are not poisoned by sulphur compounds. On the contrary, the presence of sulphur compounds is advantageous. This discovery has been embraced in many foreign patents (Britain, United States and France) and is referred to in the scientific literature as the 'Varga effect'.

Prof. Varga's main purpose in life was the development of the Hungarian chemical industry, on which he also worked as Minister of Industry during 1939-43. Students always enjoyed his lectures, which showed not only the real connexion between science and technology, but—through the industrial life of the

country and by picturing the industrial development in the free world—also the right way to be followed in the dark days of oppression.

In 1932 he was elected a member of the Hungarian Scientific Academy, and he also received many other scientific distinctions.

His last studies concerned hydrogen transfer reactions, which have been applied for the mild pressure hydrogenation of highly asphaltic crudes with high sulphur content. After successful laboratory experiments, a pilot plant was built, the results of which he reported to the sixth World Power Conference at Vienna in 1956.

NEWS and VIEWS

Prof. H. A. Brück : Astronomer Royal for Scotland

PROF. H. A. BRÜCK, whose appointment as Astronomer Royal for Scotland and professor of astronomy in the University of Edinburgh in succession to the late Prof. W. M. H. Greaves has just been announced, was formerly a pupil of Sommerfeld in Munich. His career in astronomy began at the Astrophysical Observatory, Potsdam, where in 1930 he became a member of the assistant staff. There he worked on a number of problems concerning the solar spectrum, in co-operation with E. Finlay Freundlich, and also took an important part in the Potsdam survey of stellar spectra in the Kapteyn Areas of the southern sky. In 1936 political difficulties forced him to leave Germany. After a short stay at the Vatican Observatory, he went to Cambridge, first as a junior observer at the Solar Physics Observatory, later becoming assistant director of the Observatory and John Couch Adams Astronomer. During these years he undertook pioneer work on the photoelectric measurement of line profiles in the solar spectrum. He also collaborated with W. Moss in an early investigation of $H\alpha$ and D_3 lines in solar prominences, and afterwards with F. Ruttlant attempted the extremely difficult problem of detecting photographically a displaced calcium K line from matter ejected by a chromospheric flare.

In 1947 the Irish Government decided to revive the Dunsink Observatory, which had been closed for many years, to form a part of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, and Brück agreed to become the director. Under his guidance a new solar telescope and a large spectrograph were built, and work on photoelectric photometry of stars, including studies of star scintillation, was started. A co-operative agreement with the Armagh and Harvard Observatories was made, to allow Dunsink a share of the 24-36-in. Baker-Schmidt telescope at Bloemfontein, South Africa. Among many other activities Brück himself found time to go with D. A. Jackson to Khartoum for the 1952 total solar eclipse, where they measured chromospheric line widths interferometrically in difficult conditions. In 1955 the International Astronomical Union met in Dublin, and much of the success of these meetings was due to Brück's enthusiasm and tact as the local organizer. In this exacting task he was ably assisted by Mrs. Brück, who is herself an experienced solar physicist. Prof. Brück will take up his new appointment with the good wishes of an unusually wide circle of astronomical friends.

Structural Engineering in the University of Manchester : Dr. W. Merchant

DR. WILFRED MERCHANT has been appointed to the recently established chair of structural engineering in the Faculty of Technology of the University of Manchester. Dr. Merchant graduated with first-class honours in engineering science at Oxford in 1933. He then spent four years in gaining industrial and municipal experience in the design and detail of steel and reinforced concrete frames and foundations. In 1937 he was elected to a Commonwealth Fellowship which he held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, specializing in soil mechanics. During the War, Dr. Merchant was engaged on the development of jet engines in the Gas Turbine Engineering Department at Metropolitan-Vickers, Ltd., Manchester, and joined the staff of the Manchester College of Science and Technology in 1946 as a lecturer in structural engineering. Since his appointment there, his research work has been mainly concerned with structures, though he remains a member of committees of the Aeronautical Research Council and the Gas Turbine Collaboration Committee. In 1951 he was promoted to a readership in applied mechanics and he proceeded to the degree of D.Sc. in 1955. Dr. Merchant has published a number of papers and reports on soil mechanics, on aerodynamics and on structures in various scientific journals and is joint author of a recently published volume entitled "An Introduction to the Theory of Structures".

Nuclear Research and Development in Europe

M. Louis Armand (France), Herr Franz Etzel (Germany) and Prof. Francisco Giordani (Italy) have been visiting the United Kingdom on behalf of the six governments now negotiating the Euratom Treaty—Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands—to "report on the amount of atomic energy that can be produced in the six countries in the near future and on the means whereby this can be achieved". They have already visited the member-countries of the proposed Euratom Treaty, and recently visited the United States for talks with the United States Atomic Energy Commission. M. Armand is director-general of the French State Railways and president of the Industrial Equipment Committee of the French Atomic Energy Commission; Herr Etzel is senior vice-president of the High Authority of the Coal and Steel Community; Prof. Giordani is president of the Italian National Research Council and