

be delivered by Dr. Martin Ryle on some aspect of radio astronomy; it will be given on February 3, 1958.

#### Organic Chemistry in the University of Liverpool: Prof. A. Robertson, F.R.S.

PROF. Robertson's retirement from the Heath Harrison chair of organic chemistry in the University of Liverpool leaves a big gap in the ranks of natural product chemists. A graduate of the University of Aberdeen, he later studied in Glasgow; but it was his period of research with Sir Robert Robinson in Manchester that introduced him to the field of natural colouring matters containing oxygen-heterocyclic systems, where his main interests have lain. During the five years he spent thereafter in the University of London he established himself as a leader in this field and with his election to the Liverpool chair in 1933 he proceeded to develop research on an impressive scale. Among his many contributions, his brilliant studies on rottlerin and dragon's blood resin, on the constituents of *Derris* root and on usnic acid and its relatives are particularly striking; but many other natural products derived both from higher plants and from micro-organisms have yielded to his attack. His achievements were recognized by the award of the Davy Medal of the Royal Society in 1952. A brilliant experimentalist, Robertson's published work is a model for aspiring young natural product chemists to follow. In wishing him well on his retirement to his native Aberdeenshire, organic chemists at large will hope that he will not wholly forsake the subject to which he has so notably contributed.

Dr. G. W. Kenner

DR. G. W. KENNER, lecturer in chemistry in the University of Cambridge, is to succeed Prof. Robertson at Liverpool. Son of a distinguished organic chemist, Prof. J. Kenner, lately professor of applied chemistry in the Manchester College of Technology, he was educated at Manchester Grammar School and the University of Manchester, where, after a brilliant undergraduate career, he took to the path of organic chemical research under Sir Alexander Todd and transferred to Cambridge to complete his post-graduate training with Sir Alexander Todd in 1944. Since completing his Ph.D. course, Kenner has remained in Cambridge as Fellow of Trinity Hall and University lecturer in chemistry. In association with Sir Alexander Todd, Dr. Kenner has been responsible for many major achievements in the field of nucleotide chemistry, including the total synthesis of the coenzymes flavin-adenine-dinucleotide uridine-diphosphate-glucose and cozymase. His independent researches on the synthesis and degradation of polypeptides has brought him international recognition; they are marked by the unusual combination of high experimental skill and deep theoretical insight which is characteristic of all his scientific work. His loss will be severely felt in Cambridge, but Liverpool gains a professor who will be a worthy successor to Robinson, Heilbron and Robertson, and organic chemical research under his guidance will have a bright and vigorous future.

#### Astronomy at Harvard: Prof. T. Gold

WITH the appointment of Prof. T. Gold to a Harvard chair of astronomy, Harvard College Observatory acquires one of the foremost of the younger generation of scientists in Britain. Prof. Gold's work has ranged

over many subjects, each of which has been greatly enriched by the clarity and originality of his thought and by the extraordinary fertility of his ideas. His deep and almost instinctive understanding of the fundamentals of physics has enabled him to apply them to numerous branches of astronomy as well as to geophysics and to the theory of hearing. An exceptional ability to distinguish between essential and less important features of detailed observational knowledge has led him to make such outstanding contributions to science as the theory of continual creation in cosmology, the dust theory of lunar *mare*, the sponge theory of the structure of the Earth's mantle, etc. Prof. Gold is a former Fellow of Trinity College and demonstrator in physics in Cambridge. He has been chief assistant at the Royal Greenwich Observatory for the past few years. His departure must be regarded as a severe loss to British science.

#### Pharmacognosy in the University of Nottingham: Prof. G. E. Trease

THE title of professor of pharmacognosy in the University of Nottingham has been conferred on Dr. G. E. Trease, reader in pharmacognosy in the University. Prof. Trease, who was born in Nottingham and educated at the Nottingham High School, joined the staff of University College, Nottingham, in 1925, and has been in the Department of Pharmacy since that date, apart from two years with the Ministry of Economic Warfare during the War. He became head of the School of Pharmacy in 1943, was appointed reader in pharmacognosy in 1945, and in 1949 was given the title of director of pharmaceutical studies. An honorary doctorate was conferred upon him by the University of Strasbourg in 1954.

#### André Mayer Fellowships of the Food and Agriculture Organization

THE awards of the first André Mayer Fellowships of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations have recently been announced. These research fellowships are aimed at promoting and encouraging scientific research in the fields of activity of the Organization. Recipients of the awards are: K. L. Kinsman of Australia, whose field is the study of statistical methods of evaluating long-term trends in demand; A. G. Wurtz of France, who will study the ecology of freshwater ponds; A. Sumihiko of Japan, who will study forest tree seeds; Bastos de Macedo of Portugal, studying the mechanics of the retention of phosphorus through pure minerals and through clays of soils; and P. M. Lagervall of Sweden, whose subject is population genetics applied to animal breeding. The five Fellows will be able to follow their studies for periods of one to two years at research institutes in any member country of the Organization.

The research fellowships have been named after Prof. André Mayer of France, who died in May 1956 after a long and distinguished scientific career. Mayer was one of the moving spirits in the formation of the Food and Agriculture Organization, and closely associated with its development and its governing bodies. A physiologist by training, Mayer was a professor at and later vice-president of the College of France and member of both the French Academy of Medicine and the Academy of Sciences. He was also a member of the Higher Council on Scientific Research and of the Higher Council on Agriculture.