

NEWS and VIEWS

Sir Macfarlane Burnet, O.M., F.R.S.

THE award of the Order of Merit to Frank Macfarlane Burnet will delight scientific workers generally and particularly those who labour in Burnet's chosen fields of virology and immunology. Australians will, of course, especially appreciate that this high honour has fallen to one of themselves. For most of his life Burnet has worked in Melbourne, at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, and he has been its director since 1944. With his increasing scientific distinction he has had many temptations to accept important positions outside Australia. Perhaps he likes Australia; in any event, he has resisted all blandishments and his decision to stay there has been of benefit not only to Australia but, indirectly, to the world at large, for he has founded in Melbourne a school which has attracted many students from distant parts. His contributions to knowledge mostly concern fundamental principles in biology; but others have dealt with problems which have an important Australian aspect to them—Q-fever, psittacosis, Murray valley fever and myxomatosis are examples. Burnet is best known for his work on viruses, especially influenza. He and his co-workers have been able to throw important light on the mechanisms whereby viruses become attached to and infect cells. More recently, he has been interested in the nature of antibodies, their mode of formation and of action. Above all, Burnet is an all-round biologist, a master of the 'magnificent generalization'. When men with such rare gifts turn up, they well deserve the highest of honours.

Theoretical Atomic Physics in Copenhagen :

Prof. L. Rosenfeld

PROF. LEON ROSENFELD, who has occupied the chair in theoretical physics in the University of Manchester since 1947, is now leaving to become professor in the new Nordik Institute for Theoretical Atomic Physics at Copenhagen. Prof. Rosenfeld is perhaps now most widely known for his contributions to nuclear physics, where his wide interests are well typified by his book, "Nuclear Forces" (1948), which was one of the first authoritative and comprehensive works in the field of nuclear physics, and for his work as editor of *Nuclear Physics*—the first journal devoted entirely to this field. However, his interests have not been limited to this single branch of physics, nor has his influence been confined to Manchester alone. His earlier work with Niels Bohr on the interpretation of quantum mechanics has been followed by many publications dealing with basic problems in physics, their history and their philosophical implications. His views and influence have been made felt in many parts of the world, not only by his published work, but also by his lectures and personal contacts. For Prof. Rosenfeld, physics, and science generally, is part of a mature, scholarly and cultural outlook, an outlook which was conveyed to, and was appreciated by, audiences in many countries. Prof. Rosenfeld's views and ideas were part of the culture of the civilized world, and although the centre from which they are disseminated will now move from Manchester to Copenhagen, their influence will no doubt be as widespread as ever. In Manchester, as elsewhere, one may hope still to continue to enjoy them.

Theoretical Physics in Manchester :

Dr. B. H. Flowers

DR. BRIAN H. FLOWERS has been appointed to the chair of theoretical physics in Manchester, from which Prof. Rosenfeld resigns this year. Dr. Flowers took the Natural Science Tripos at Cambridge, and then worked at the Atomic Energy Laboratory in Montreal, and after the Second World War joined the newly established Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell. For a time he worked in Prof. Peierls's Department of Mathematical Physics, University of Birmingham, and was awarded a D.Sc. degree by that University. In 1952 he was appointed, at a remarkably early age, to be head of the Theoretical Physics Division at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment, Harwell, and since then he has continued to occupy this very responsible post. Dr. Flowers is widely known for his many outstanding contributions to the theory of nuclear structure and the application of group-theoretical methods to these problems. In his work at Harwell, Dr. Flowers has contributed to many important problems which have arisen in the extensive range of activities covered by nuclear science and atomic energy. His intellectual gifts, his great energy, his wide experience of physical problems and, through his early work, his first-hand appreciation of the problems of experimental physics, will, in addition to his expert knowledge of nuclear physics, all be greatly appreciated at Manchester. Manchester has a long and distinguished tradition in the theoretical physics, a tradition which includes Bohr, Eddington, Hartree, Milne and Schuster, as well as Dr. Flowers's immediate predecessor. Dr. Flowers will, without doubt, further enhance this great tradition.

Dr. J. Glasspoole, I.S.O.

DR. J. GLASSPOOLE, a principal scientific officer in the Meteorological Office and well known to all those requiring information regarding the distribution of rainfall in the British Isles, retired at the end of last year after nearly thirty-eight years service. Dr. Glasspoole began his career in the British Rainfall Organization, which was taken over by the Meteorological Office in 1919. Thereafter he was continuously employed on climatological work, especially the study of one particular element, rainfall. He wrote a large number of papers on the subject and became a recognized authority on the incidence and distribution of rainfall in the British Isles. In recognition of his services, he was appointed a Companion of the Imperial Service Order, and the Institution of Water Engineers made him an honorary member of the Institution.

The Scientific American

IN January 1948, the editing and publishing of *The Scientific American* (415 Madison Avenue, New York, 17), one of the oldest of America's scientific journals (founded in 1845), was taken over by Mr. Gerard Piel and his two partners, Mr. Dennis Flanagan and Mr. Donald H. Miller, jun. At that time, the journal was being far from successful, since only about two thousand copies of each issue were paid for in cash, and advertising revenue was quite negligible. During the past ten years, however, *The Scientific American* has undergone a metamorphosis