seventeen, he obtained a position as technician at the Wellcome Laboratories, Herne Hill, working under Dr. (later Prof.) G. Barger. By evening studies at Chelsea Polytechnic, he graduated with honours in 1906, and was promoted to the staff of the Wellcome Laboratories. Soon he began to co-operate with Dr. (later Sir) Henry Dale in work on acetylcholine, other choline esters, and the ergot alkaloids, and this formed the basis of a long and valued friendship between them. When Dale entered the service of the Medical Research Committee (later Council) in 1914, Ewins did the same, and worked with him in the production of 'Salvarsan' and other drugs formerly made in Germany and by then no longer available. Early in 1917 he was offered an attractive appointment with May and Baker, Ltd., which he accepted; and he continued with this firm for the rest of his scientific life, becoming the head of its chemical research department and director of research.

Ewins's main interest was in chemotherapy. After much work on the organic arsenicals, he turned his attention to other fields. In the middle 1930's Dr. E. M. Lourie and Prof. Warrington Yorke, of Liverpool, had discovered that synthalin was very active in killing trypanosomes *in vitro*. Following development work by the late Dr. Harold King at the National Institute for Medical Research, Ewins took up this lead and synthesized a long series of diamidine compounds, of which the most active, pentamidine, has proved of great value in combating sleeping sickness in Africa. One intramuscular injection is enough to protect a man against this infection for six months, and this procedure has been applied to millions of people in tropical Africa to safeguard them against this dangerous disease. Another member of the same series—phenamidine—is widely used for curing babesiasis (redwater) of cattle and dogs. These drugs are also active against kala-azar.

The work for which Ewins is best known was his discovery of the famous '*M* & *B* 693', or sulphapyridine as it was later named. After prontosil had been prepared by Domagk and Mietsch in 1933 as a cure for streptococcal infections, the French workers, Trefouel and Bovet, showed that the antibacterial activity resided in the simple structure—*p*-aminobenzene sulphonamide, or sulphanilamide. The early attempts to obtain greater and wider activity by modification of this structure were not very successful until in 1937 Ewins and Phillips inserted a pyridine group in the sulphonamide radical. This compound was tested by Sir Lionel Whitby and found to be very active in curing mice experimentally infected with pneumococci. The new compound was quickly applied to human infections and proved to be brilliantly successful, and for the first time in medical history lobar pneumonia could be cured by a simple drug. Later, sulphapyridine was supplanted by other more active and less toxic compounds (including sulphathiazole synthesized by Ewins and Newbery), but the inspiration of its discovery will long be remembered. In 1943, Ewins was elected to the Royal Society. He continued to direct the research organization which he had built up until his retirement in March 1952.

Ewins was a simple and modest man, but he knew his own mind, and once he had made a decision he persevered with determination. He was well liked and well respected. Besides his scientific work, his chief pleasures were working in his garden, reading and motoring. He leaves a son and a daughter.

F. HAWKING

NEWS and VIEWS

The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority

MR. W. R. J. COOK, deputy director of the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Aldermaston, has been made a full-time member of the Atomic Energy Authority. This new appointment makes it possible to progress towards certain alterations in the structure of the Authority. Three full-time members of the Authority have hitherto each had three types of responsibility. First, they have had executive control of one or more of the Authority's establishments. Second, they have been responsible for formulating policy on, and for broad oversight of, the subjects constituting their own special fields (research, production and engineering, and weapons). Third, they have had to join with their colleagues in considering and deciding jointly on the general policies to be pursued by the Authority. The purpose of the alterations which are being made is to free these members from their executive duties, and thus enable them to devote more time to their other responsibilities. Sir John Cockcroft, who has since the setting up of the Authority held the posts of member for scientific research and director of the Atomic Energy Research Establishment, Harwell, will be succeeded in the latter post by Dr. B. F. J. Schonland (the present deputy director).

Mr. Cook will be responsible at Board-level for policy questions concerning the Authority's production factories and the engineering aspects of the Authority's work. Since Sir Leonard Owen was appointed managing director of the Industrial Group in September 1957, he has had executive charge of the establishments in that Group. Sir William Penney will continue to be member for weapons research and development and, pending the appointment of a new director of the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, he will continue to hold that post also. The duties of Sir Donald Perrott, member for finance and administration, and of Mr. W. Strath, member for external relations and commercial policy, are unchanged. Mr. Cook and Dr. Schonland will take up their new appointments on February 17.

National Research Council of Canada: Dr. J. B. Collip, C.B.E., F.R.S.

THE retirement is announced of Dr. J. B. Collip from the directorship of the Division of Medical Research of the National Research Council of Canada. He has held this appointment since 1947 when the new Division of Medical Research superseded the old Advisory Committee on Medical Research, of which Dr. Collip had also been chairman since 1941. Dr. Collip, of course, is best known for his work in purifying the early preparations of insulin and thus playing a leading part in making this hormone available for general clinical use. Dr.