

NEWS and VIEWS

British Association : New Lecture for Children

PROF. J. ROTBLAT, professor of physics in the University of London, at St. Bartholomew's Hospital Medical School, will lecture on "Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy" at Northgate Grammar School, Ipswich, on February 25. The lecture will be given in two sessions to different audiences, and will be illustrated by films and demonstrations; there will also be visits to an atomic energy exhibition which the Atomic Energy Commission is arranging in Northgate School for the whole week. It is expected that some nine hundred children will hear the lecture, arrangements for which have been made by Mr. L. R. Missen, chief education officer, East Suffolk, in co-operation with the British Association for the Advancement of Science, as part of the new campaign of the latter to present science to the people.

Pure Mathematics at Cambridge :

Prof. A. S. Besicovitch, F.R.S.

PROF. A. S. BESICOVITCH, Rouse Ball Professor of mathematics in the University of Cambridge, retires this year, having reached the age of sixty-seven. He was elected to the chair in 1950, succeeding J. E. Littlewood, who was the first holder. He has recently worked at a number of problems in real-function theory, in particular the theory of area and extremal problems. He has directed research in these topics but he has not restricted his teaching to graduates. To the pleasure and profit of those working for the Mathematical Tripos, he has organized seminars for them. He has also maintained a flow of 'Contest Problems', at which an aspiring young analyst may try his skill with the possible reward of a public announcement: 'Perfect solution of problem was made by A. B. C.'. Prof. Besicovitch has been credited with the remark that a mathematician's reputation rests on the number of bad proofs that he has given—in the sense that pioneer work can be rough. He preserves unimpaired his mastery of intricate mathematical situations, and many more good and bad proofs are expected from him.

Prof. H. Davenport, F.R.S.

PROF. HAROLD DAVENPORT, who has held since 1945 the Astor chair of pure mathematics at University College, London, will succeed Prof. Besicovitch on October 1. Born in 1907, he took degrees at Manchester and at Cambridge, becoming a Fellow of Trinity College. He was elected to the Royal Society in 1940. Most of his work has been in some branch or other of the theory of numbers. His early papers dealt with problems of the analytic theory, following the methods of Hardy and Littlewood. Later he turned to Diophantine approximation and the geometry of numbers. He has written about a hundred papers and some of them give solutions of problems which had been long outstanding. To mention only one example, Minkowski's problem, of the minimum value of the product of three linear forms the determinant of which is 1, was solved with consummate skill and elegance in 1938. He has now in course of publication some fundamental results on the minima of indefinite quadratic forms. Prof. Davenport has built up a strong school of research at University College and there are mathematicians of international repute who owe their early guidance

and encouragement to him. He is one of the founders of the journal *Mathematika*, and he has just been elected president of the London Mathematical Society. One of the most resourceful English pure mathematicians of his generation, he is expected to solve with distinction as difficult a problem as he has yet tackled—that of succeeding Littlewood and Besicovitch.

Aircraft-propulsion Studies at Cranfield :

Mr. A. G. Smith

MR. A. G. SMITH, who has been appointed to the chair of aircraft propulsion in the College of Aeronautics, Cranfield, entered the Royal College of Science and Technology, London, as a Royal Scholar in 1937 and graduated with a first-class degree in physics in 1939. He studied aeronautics for a post-graduate year at the City and Guilds College, London, and then worked for Blackburn Aircraft, Ltd., at Brough, until 1942, when he joined Power Jets, Ltd. During the rest of the Second World War he was engaged on research and development work on various Whittle engines, and particularly on compressor aerodynamic development. He joined the National Gas Turbine Establishment on its formation and worked on theoretical and experimental aspects of turbine cooling. In 1952 he was appointed reader in the University of London in applied thermodynamics with special reference to gas turbines. Since that time, besides carrying out research on aerodynamic and heat-transfer problems, he has run a very successful postgraduate course in gas-turbine technology at the City and Guilds College. He has published papers on turbine cooling and on heat transfer, aerodynamic and thermodynamic matters related to gas turbines.

Horticulture at Nottingham :

Prof. J. P. Hudson, O.B.E.

THE newly created chair of horticulture at the University of Nottingham has been filled by the appointment of Dr. J. P. Hudson, the present head of the Department of Horticulture, who thus becomes the first student of the old Midland Agricultural College to succeed to a chair. Dr. Hudson has had a varied career. Entering college in 1927, he graduated with the degree of B.Sc. (Hort.) of the University of London in 1930, and then served one year as student assistant in the Agricultural Economics Department at the Midland Agricultural College. From then until the outbreak of war in 1939 he was engaged in practical horticulture, at first in industry but later as horticultural instructor at the East Sussex School of Agriculture. During the War he served with considerable distinction in the Royal Engineers and in 1942 spent six months in the United States organizing a bomb disposal school. For the last four years of the War he was engaged on bomb disposal research and experimental work, and was made O.B.E. and awarded the George Medal (and Bar) for his services. Indeed, he must be one of the few professors to discover an aptitude for research, six years after leaving the university, on a material where a decisive result might well have the rather unusual effect of terminating one's research career.

Leaving the army on the termination of hostilities with the rank of major, he proceeded to New Zealand to take charge of the Dominion Horticultural Station at Levin, where he was responsible for horticultural extension work in the market garden, glasshouse and nursery industries. He returned to England in 1948,