

NEWS and VIEWS

Nobel Prize for Chemistry for 1959:

Prof. Jaroslav Heyrovsky

PROF. JAROSLAV HEYROVSKY, director of the Polarographic Research Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Prague, has been awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry for 1959, for his discovery and development of polarography. A native of Prague, he studied under Sir William Ramsay and F. G. Donnan in London before the First World War and then returned to Prague to continue his research work. It is of interest that the work on the determination of the electrode potential of aluminium which led eventually to the development of the polarographic method was suggested to him by Donnan. The first polarographic apparatus was made in 1925, but the method did not become widely recognized for a further decade, and Heyrovsky's major book, "Polarographie", did not appear until 1941. However, the number of papers dealing with polarography now approaches the 10,000 mark, and the technique finds application in many fields of chemistry and biochemistry; it has had a profound influence on analytical chemistry, for some determinations which are difficult or impossible to carry out by other means yield readily to polarographic treatment. In addition, there have been made non-analytical applications. For example, the kinetics of electrode reactions and of chemical reactions associated with redox processes have been studied, redox potentials have been determined and the energetics of the reduction of organic compounds have been elucidated. Prof. Heyrovsky has not enjoyed good health for some years, and is therefore prevented from accepting many of the invitations which he receives to lecture abroad. The present award is a timely recognition of his great services to analytical chemistry, particularly as he will celebrate his seventieth anniversary next year.

Glass Technology at Sheffield:

Mr. Michael Parkin

WITH the retirement of Mr. Michael Parkin, the Department of Glass Technology in the University of Sheffield lost its last member of that small team of pioneers recruited by Prof. W. E. S. Turner in the years immediately following the First World War to build up a department which has become world-famous. Mr. Parkin studied chemistry in the University of Sheffield; however, his studies were interrupted by war-time services in an explosives factory and in the Royal Flying Corps. In 1920 he joined the Department of Glass Technology, and apart from a short period in industry (he was works chemist to Messrs. Barr and Stroud, Ltd., 1924-28) he has served the Department continuously. Until 1955 the Department performed dual functions, carrying out the work of a University department and advisory work and investigations for the industry under the advice of the Glass Delegacy, the members of which were roughly equally divided between the University and the glass industry. Mr. Parkin made a major contribution to this work. This prevented his taking a direct personal responsibility for the research side of the work of the Department; but those whose responsibility it was to direct the research work would be the first to acknowledge the important part played by Mr.

Parkin in assisting research workers. In 1955 the industrial work was taken over by the newly formed British Glass Industry Research Association, a step which Mr. Parkin never pretended to approve, but, as all who know him would expect, he has, during these past four years, spared no effort to help the University Department in its new regime to flourish. Perhaps the value which his present colleagues place on his services can best be emphasized by saying that he has been persuaded to continue as a part-time member of the staff for a short period while certain plans for future staffing of the Department mature.

British Association Representatives in the U.S.S.R.

THE British Association for the Advancement of Science has accepted an invitation from the U.S.S.R.—Great Britain Society, conveyed through the Soviet Embassy in London, to send two representatives to the U.S.S.R. to visit schools, universities and scientific institutions, to meet Russian scientists and to discuss future relationships and exchanges. The British Association's representatives are Dr. W. E. Swinton, who is an honorary general secretary of the Association, and Sir George Allen, who is its secretary.

European-American Nuclear Data Committee

A COMMITTEE for European-American Nuclear Data has been set up by the European Nuclear Energy Agency, in agreement with Euratom, the United States of America and Canada, to assure collaboration among members and associate countries of the Organization for European Economic Co-operation in the measurement of nuclear properties. The Committee will be primarily concerned with measurements of nuclear cross-sections and other basic data essential for the technical development of nuclear energy. The Committee is to consist of thirteen experts from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, the Euratom and other O.E.E.C. countries. Its operations will be in accordance with existing bilateral agreements. The work of the Committee will include the critical review of existing knowledge of nuclear cross-sections and constants, and of facilities, techniques and man-power available for their determination. The Committee will also collect and correlate data from available sources, seek to establish a standard nomenclature and methods of presentation for such data, and recommend and sponsor, as necessary, technical meetings and symposia to further its objectives. Finally, the Committee will promote the pooling and exchange, where appropriate, of equipment and personnel. Further information can be obtained from the Organization for European Economic Co-operation, Château de la Muette, 2 rue André-Pascal, Paris XVI^e.

New Forensic Science Society

A DECISION to form the Forensic Science Society was taken at a well-attended meeting held at the University of Nottingham on October 31. The object of the Society is to advance the study and application of forensic science in all its branches. With this aim in view, a series of symposia, to be held alternately in London and in the provinces, is being arranged.