

NEWS and VIEWS

Assyriology in London :

Prof. C. J. Gadd, C.B.E., F.B.A.

PROF. C. J. GADD, who until his retirement in 1960 held the chair of Ancient Semitic languages and civilizations at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, is certainly the leading Assyriologist in Britain, and one who is very highly esteemed by his colleagues abroad. His work in the field of Sumerian and Babylonian history and literature, as well as in Mesopotamian archaeology, has earned him a world-wide—and fully justified—reputation. Born at Bath in 1893, Gadd was educated at King Edward VI School, Bath, and at Brasenose College, Oxford, served in the First World War, and joined the British Museum in 1919 as an assistant keeper in the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities—now split into two independent departments, Western Asiatic Antiquities and Egyptian Antiquities. In 1948 he succeeded Sidney Smith as keeper of the Department, a post he held with great distinction until the year 1955, in which he was appointed to his chair at the University, again as the successor of his former colleague, Sidney Smith.

Besides numerous articles in scholarly journals and five volumes in the well-known series, *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*, Prof. Gadd has published several important works, including *A Sumerian Reading Book* (1924), now unfortunately out of print, and *The Stones of Assyria* (1936), a recognized standard book on the history of the first discoveries of Assyrian Palaces. Prof. Gadd has served on the staff of British archaeological expeditions in Iraq (Ur, 1923–24; Nimrud, 1952) and Syria (Alalakh-Atshana, 1946). He was chairman of the Assyriological Section of the Twenty-third International Congress of Orientalists when it met at Cambridge in 1954. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1940, and was made C.B.E. in 1955. Two years earlier, Oxford conferred upon him the honorary degree of doctor of letters, and his former College elected him to an honorary fellowship.

New Chair of Assyriology

A CHAIR of assyriology, as recently established in the University of London, has been long overdue in Britain. 'Assyriology' now includes, by convention, a group of studies concerning ancient western Asia, from the beginnings of civilization in those parts down to about the time of Alexander's conquests. Thus it comprises not only an assortment of languages, by no means all Semitic, but also a diversity of cultures over a span of three thousand years, their bond of union being, in general, the cuneiform script. At their outset these studies owed perhaps most of all to a few men of genius of British birth; yet a chair of assyriology by name has never hitherto existed. The new foundation replaces the former chair of ancient Semitic languages and civilizations.

Prof. D. J. Wiseman

MR. D. J. WISEMAN, the professor-designate, has already a notable career in the learned world. While assistant-keeper in the British Museum he has made his mark as an interpreter of cuneiform texts. From

the later period of Babylon and Assyria he has published two sets of historical documents, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings* and *The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon*, both with universal acceptance as definitive. From an earlier age and a provincial milieu he has made known *The Alalakh Tablets*, a patch of new ground which he opened with great success. Also to his credit are two widely circulated books upon Western Asiatic archaeology. All who are interested in the peoples of the Ancient Orient will wish him, with confidence, a tenure of the chair as brilliant as it promises to be long.

Geophysical Research in the Meteorological Office

DR. FRANK STACEY has returned to the United Kingdom from the Research School of Physical Sciences in the Australian National University at Canberra to take up one of the two new Gassiot research fellowships in the Meteorological Office. He has written extensively on geomagnetism and will conduct his future researches from Edinburgh, where he will enjoy the advantages of close association with scientists of allied interests at the University and at Eskdalemuir Observatory near Dumfries. The latter has, for many years, been the centre of geomagnetic work in the Meteorological Office. Dr. H. M. Iyer has been appointed to the other fellowship. Dr. Iyer is at present working at the University of California and will take up his new appointment in the autumn, when he will work from Kew Observatory on the increasingly important subject of seismology.

C.S.I.R.O. Wildlife Survey Section :

Mr. H. J. Frith

MR. H. J. FRITH has been appointed officer-in-charge of the Wildlife Survey Section of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (Australia). He succeeds Mr. F. N. Ratcliffe, who resigned last year to become assistant chief of the Organization's Division of Entomology. Mr. Frith graduated in agricultural science from Sydney in 1941. During the rest of the War he served in the Middle East and New Guinea and won a commission. He joined the Organization after his demobilization in 1946 as an assistant research officer at the Irrigation Research Station, Griffith, New South Wales. He remained at Griffith for five years, engaged on horticultural research on citrus problems. He transferred to the Wildlife Survey Section in July 1951. He was originally seconded to the Section to take part in the rabbit surveys associated with the release of the first myxomatosis-infected animals. From 1952 onwards he was able to develop his special interests in birds. He has worked on a number of Australian species, including parrots, pigeons and finches, but his chief subjects have been wild ducks and mallee fowl.

First World Meteorological Day

THE wide scope of the application of meteorological knowledge to agriculture, aviation, shipping, flood protection, water resource questions of many kinds, industry and the activities of the general public is little realized. Still less are the potentialities of