

discussion, and it was suggested that individual departments could and should do more in this respect, particularly in the light of the shortage of biochemists which Britain is now experiencing.

In describing the recently revised four-year biochemistry course at Oxford, Prof. D. D. Woods stressed the importance of adequate background teaching, particularly in chemistry, but pointed out the need to introduce biochemistry at an early stage in the course in order to stimulate student interest. Experimentation in biochemical research is steadily becoming more sophisticated, and recent trends have emphasized the more biological aspects of the subject. The early introduction of such topics as cell physiology and genetics is therefore an important feature of the course at Oxford, and the Biochemistry Department was particularly fortunate in having the co-operation of other departments in the teaching of such topics.

Much interest was expressed in the course at Oxford, particularly from the point of view of its breadth of outlook, although it was clear that Oxford with its resources was in a particularly favourable position to overcome time-table problems which so beset smaller departments.

In the final paper, Dr. E. M. Crook discussed the M.Sc. course in biochemistry which has been in existence for some years at University College, London. Dr. Crook suggested that a good deal can be said for not attempting to teach biochemistry as an undergraduate subject, but a major disadvantage in adopting this attitude, so far as the course at University College, London, had been concerned, was that few M.Sc. candidates have learned any biochemistry, even of the most elementary kind, before entering the course. Moreover, a first-class honours

graduate in, for example, chemistry has to be exceptionally strong-minded to proceed to an M.Sc. course in another subject in the face of the psychological impulse to go on at once to prove himself as a research worker. The danger, therefore, is that the M.Sc. course may tend to attract the less-able student who may look on the course as a means of 'upgrading' a relatively poor initial degree. On the whole, however, it seems likely that postgraduate teaching must increase. Various departments could, between them, provide a formidable series of postgraduate courses of different specialist nature, and this could prove of great value in strengthening the subject in Britain.

In summarizing the proceedings, Prof. F. C. Happold confessed himself to be out of sympathy with the title of the colloquium. We were not concerned with the training of biochemists as one trains circus animals but with their education. The latter embraces the former but it is also more difficult to achieve. In any event, those departments which already had honours courses in biochemistry were certainly not proposing to abandon them. Such courses were an excellent education in themselves providing that sufficient time was available to do the job properly. In his own opinion the four-year course appeared to be particularly satisfactory from this point of view.

Judging from the conversations which followed the closing of the meeting, the original aims of the colloquium in stimulating thought and discussion had been successfully achieved. The Biochemical Society hopes to publish the proceedings of the meeting, in monograph form, at an early date.

K. S. DODGSON

NEWS and VIEWS

New President of the British Association :

Sir John Cockcroft, O.M., K.C.B., C.B.E., F.R.S.

SIR JOHN COCKCROFT, Master of Churchill College, Cambridge, and part-time member of the U.K. Atomic Energy Authority, has been elected president for 1962 of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. That year, the annual meeting will be held in Manchester.

As is well known, Sir John has achieved world-wide fame as an atomic physicist. He was Jacksonian professor of natural philosophy in the University of Cambridge during 1939-46. His first researches, beginning in 1924 at Cambridge, were concerned with the heating of transformer coils, and later, at the Cavendish Laboratory, he carried out work on the deposition of surface films by atomic beams. Later, with Kapitza, he designed much of the equipment used in the production of intense magnetic fields. In 1932, with Walton, he had devised the arrangement by which nuclear disintegration by artificially accelerated particles was first observed. He was a prime mover in the development of equipment and the erection of buildings for which the physicists at Cambridge must now be grateful. During most of the Second World War period he was chief superintendent of air defence, Research and Development Establishment, Ministry of Supply, and then became director of the Atomic Energy Division, National Research Council of Canada, during 1944-46. He

was then appointed director of the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell.

Such is the high esteem in which his work is held that Sir John has been or is a member of many scientific and advisory organizations and he has been the recipient of numerous State, academic and other honours. Among the most recent are the 1961 Atoms for Peace Award, which was established as a memorial to Henry Ford and his son Edsel, consisting of a gold medal and 75,000 dollars, and the chancellorship of the Australian National University, Canberra.

Norwich and its Region

VISITORS to Norwich will find *Norwich and its Region* a very pleasing work. (Pp. 224. Norwich: Local Executive Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1961. 15s.). It provides a most informative survey of the region of Norfolk and north Suffolk. The survey opens with a concise account of the historical events which have moulded East Anglia. To-day it is in the midst of a second industrial and agricultural revolution. Though to some it may appear a quiet backwater, residents are conscious of the mounting pace at which it is being drawn relentlessly into the main stream. The second section deals with geology, physiographical features, climate, and the nature of the soil. Results of recent research are emphasized. In fact, advances in knowledge of the Pleistocene deposits have been