

Directorship of Twyford Laboratories, Ltd.

THE director of Twyford Laboratories, Ltd., Dr. H. D. Kay, has announced his retirement as from the end of the year, when he will have completed his pioneering three-year term on the board of the company. As from January 1, Dr. F. A. Robinson, chairman of Crookes Laboratories, Ltd., will be the managing director of Twyford Laboratories, Ltd., but will also continue as chairman of Crookes Laboratories. Twyford Laboratories, Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of Arthur Guinness Son and Co., Ltd., was established to conduct fundamental research into animal and plant biochemistry and microbiology, and was recently expanded to enable research into chemotherapy and virology to be carried out.

U.K. Nuclear Reactor Research and Development

In a written answer in the House of Commons on November 5, the Parliamentary Secretary for Science, Mr. D. Freeth, stated that the Capenhurst Plant was not being closed down. Its output would be reduced gradually by the end of 1963 to the minimum level to keep it in production and available to meet any future increase in demand. Difficulties in the operation of the Dounreay breeder reactor experiment had been overcome and the reactor resumed operation at 30 MW (Heat) on July 26 and since October 14 had been supplying 3 MW of electricity to the national grid. It was intended as the next phase to run the reactor for some months at about 30 MW (Heat) to obtain information on fuel element behaviour. The Authority now has in hand the design and development of a prototype fast power reactor drawing on the experience at Dounreay.

Expenditure on Buildings and Plant for Scientific Research

In the House of Commons on November 5 the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. R. Maudling, announced in the debate on the Address to the Throne that he proposed to raise the investment allowance on new plant and machinery and other assets from 20 to 30 per cent and on industrial buildings and other assets from 10 to 15 per cent. The cost of this change was estimated at some £8 million next year and about £50 million the following year. He also proposed that for new heavy capital plant and machinery the lowest actual annual rate of depreciation should be 15 per cent corresponding to a 12 per cent basic rate. The cost of this change was estimated at £15 million in the second year, rising to as much as £35 million a year. He also proposed that capital expenditure on buildings and plant for scientific research should in future be written off 100 per cent in the first year, as well as qualifying for the increased investment allowance of 30 per cent. The cost of this change was estimated at £4 million in the first full year.

The Building Research Station and the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works

In reply to a question in the House of Lords on November 7 regarding the functions of the newly appointed Director-General of Research and Development of the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, Sir Donald Gibson, and whether this appointment would involve the removal of the Building Research Station from the responsibility of the Minister for Science, Lord Hailsham said first that he hoped that two principles would remain inviolate. First, research under Government auspices should be

undertaken under the general supervision of scientists: this was the purpose of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research and of the Research Council system. Secondly, the organization of research should be co-ordinated centrally, usually through one of the Research Councils. In spite of the importance he attached to these two principles, Lord Hailsham said that he did not deprecate research by executive departments provided these principles were accepted. The functions of the Director-General of Research and Development would be to co-ordinate and extend the activities of the various research and development groups throughout the Government service; to assume direct responsibility for the work of the development groups in the Ministry of Public Building and Works; to encourage and develop generally the use of new and rapid methods of construction; to standardize the use and production of building components to the greatest possible extent, and to secure the widespread dissemination of the best modern practices. The appointment did not involve the removal of the Building Research Station from the responsibility of the Minister for Science or of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. It was a necessary step in the assumption of responsibility by the Minister of Public Building and Works for co-ordinating the extensive work already proceeding within Government departments in the development and use of new, cheaper and speedier methods of construction. Almost half the total output of the construction industries was for public authorities. Sir Donald Gibson's functions would lie far more in the operational field than in that of pure research, although undoubtedly he would be greatly interested in research and would wish to stimulate and direct research along the most fruitful lines.

The National Research Council of Canada

FOUNDED in 1916, the National Research Council of Canada now has an operating budget of about 42 million dollars. Some 14 million dollars are required for 'foundation' work—scholarships and research grants, in science, engineering and medicine—and the remainder is used to operate the laboratories. High standards are required of the 2,600 personnel, of whom 730 are scientists and engineers. About 690 of these are engaged in research, 360 having a Ph.D. degree and 330 having a Bachelor's or Master's degree. Approximately 250 are engineers. A detailed report of all the Divisions, including the Atlantic Regional Laboratory and the Prairie Regional Laboratory, gives considerable information about the contribution the Council is making in building up knowledge and the economy of Canada (*Canada. Review of the National Research Council, 1962*. Pp. 383. Ottawa: National Research Council, 1962).

Grants to Students in the United Kingdom

THE important changes in grants to students operating from September 1, 1962, are detailed in Part 1 of a pamphlet issued as a short guide for students resident in England and Wales who are taking first degree or comparable courses (*Grants to Students—First Degree and Comparable Courses*. Pp. 8. London: Ministry of Education, 1962). Part 2 explains the contribution to be paid by students and parents. An appendix, which lists full-time or sandwich courses designated by the Ministry as comparable to first degree courses, also indicates where further information can be obtained.