British grass had potentialities not only for reclamation but also as a crop. Its food value to stock is roughly equivalent to that of medium-quality hay, and it seems to be relished by a wide variety of herbivores. Although it has proved too coarse for the highly bred livestock of countries like Holland and Denmark, the older breeds of domestic animals graze freely on *Spartina* when it is available. Because of the difficult terrain on which it grows, there have been few attempts actually to harvest the grass. However, an experiment at Bridgwater Bay has shown that in suitable areas it is possible to cut and transport *Spartina* using light machinery, and the cut material is being tested for possible use as silage.

In spite of its economic value, the advent of *Spartina* is not an unmixed blessing. The very rapidity with which it can spread and transform a habitat can itself be a cause of trouble in certain circumstances. Fears that it would block major navigation channels in harbours have proved unfounded; but in estuarine marshes it sometimes chokes minor channels used by yachtsmen. Again, where it invades mud-flats near holiday beaches, the amenities of the area may be spoiled, and the beaches themselves eventually obliterated. Further, from a conservation angle, there is a very real danger that certain forms of wild-life may be lost in coastal areas overrun by the grass; other salt-marsh plants may be eliminated, the feeding grounds for wintering wild-fowl covered, and variety in the marshes reduced at the expense of the spread of a single species. Control measures for *Spartina* are under investigation, however, and some success has been achieved with carefully timed applications of some of the more innocuous herbicides.

In all, the *Spartina townsendii* story is clearly one of importance from both an academic and a practical point of view. Its main scientific interest lies in its exemplification of the evolution of a new species under natural conditions by hybridization between two geographically isolated species brought together by chance, restoration of fertility by chromosome doubling, and successful establishment in a vacant ecological niche. Man has not been slow to take advantage of the particular ecological and physiological properties of the new species which have contributed to its success; and it is perhaps ironic to note that it is just these marsh-building properties which may have hastened reclamation and industrial development along the Southampton Water shores, so that the classic birthplace of *Spartina townsendii* is now threatened with extinction.

J. M. Lambert

NEWS and VIEWS

Genetics in the University of Birmingham: Prof. J. L. Jinks

Dr. J. L. Jinks, at present honorary reader in genetics in the University of Birmingham, has been appointed to the chair of genetics in succession to Prof. K. Mather, who has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Southampton (*Nature*, 203, 24; 1964). Dr. Jinks gained both his B.Sc. and his Ph.D. at the University of Birmingham. He graduated in botany in 1950 and was awarded a research studentship in genetics by the Agricultural Research Council, which he held in the Department of Genetics in the University, obtaining his Ph.D. in 1952. Following his research studentship, he was appointed to the staff of the Agricultural Research Council's Unit of Biometrical Genetics, attached to the Department of Genetics, and has continued in this appointment up to the present time. He spent a year as a Harkness Fellow at the California Institute of Technology, and has worked for shorter periods in Copenhagen and Milan. Dr. Jinks's research has been mainly concerned with inheritance in moulds, bacteria and viruses, how they adjust themselves to their environments and how those which cause diseases of domestic plants adapt themselves to attack their hosts. He has also investigated the inheritance of characters which, like yield in domestic plants and animals, vary by imperceptible gradations over a wide range of phenotypic expressions. The methods of analysis that he has devised for such characters are now in wide use by plant breeders and have also led to important advances in the understanding of the hereditary determination of behaviour in animals. Dr. Jinks's appointment will take effect from October 1, 1965.

Agricultural Chemistry in the University of Leeds: Prof. J. A. F. Rook

Dr. J. A. F. Rook, principal scientific officer in the Chemistry Department of the National Institute for Research in Dairying, Shinfield, has been appointed to the chair of agricultural chemistry in the University of Leeds. Dr. Rook was educated at Scarborough High School for Boys and the University College of Wales, where he graduated with first-class honours in chemistry with agricultural chemistry in 1947. He held an Agricultural Research Council research training grant from 1947 until 1950 and spent two years in the Chemistry and Physics Department of the National Institute for Research in Dairying, followed by one year in the Department of Animal Physiology and Biochemistry of the Danish State Agricultural Research Laboratories, Copenhagen. He gained a Ph.D. degree at the University of Glasgow in 1957 for a thesis on "Some Studies on Energy Metabolism". In 1950 he was appointed scientific officer at the Hannah Dairy Research Institute, Ayr, and three years later was promoted to senior scientific officer. He returned to the National Institute for Research in Dairying in 1954, as senior scientific officer, and has held his present appointment as principal scientific officer in the Chemistry Department of that establishment since 1961. Dr. Rook's research interests include magnesium metabolism in calves and dairy cows, milk composition and metabolism and milk secretion.

Applied Mathematics in the University of Liverpool: Prof. J. G. Oldroyd

Prof. J. G. Oldroyd, professor of applied mathematics in the University College of Swansea, has been appointed to the newly established second chair of applied mathematics in the University of Liverpool. Prof. Oldroyd is forty-three years of age and was educated at Bradford Grammar School and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he won the Rouse Ball Mathematical Prize in 1941, the Mathison Prize in 1942, and successfully completed the Cambridge Mathematical Tripos Part III with distinction in 1942; he was awarded a B.A. degree in 1942, M.A. in 1946, Ph.D. in 1949 and Sc.D. in 1958. From 1942 until 1945 he served as an experimental officer with the Ministry of Supply, undertaking theoretical research mainly on the internal ballistics of rockets. From 1945 until 1953 he held the post of mathematical physicist at Courtaulds' Fundamental Research Laboratory at Maidenhead. He was a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, from 1947 until 1951. In 1953 he was appointed professor of applied mathematics at University College of Swansea and became head of the Department of Applied Mathematics when it was created in 1957. Prof. Oldroyd has served as Dean of the Faculty of Science at Swansea, as a member of the College Council, a member of the Academic Board of the University of Wales and a member of the University of Wales Commission. From 1955 until 1957 he was president of the British Society of Rheology. Prof. Oldroyd will take up his new appointment on January 1.