

was formed in 1952, later to become the British Weed Control Council. Dr. Woodford has been intimately concerned with the affairs of the Council and has played a special part in the organization of the biennial conferences also, as chairman of the Recommendations Committee and editor of the *Weed Control Handbook*. Dr. Woodford did much to encourage the formation of the European Weed Research Council, set up in 1960, and was its first president. Research, dissemination of information and liaison formed the principal activities of the Unit at Oxford, and soon after its formation it became clear that a permanent centre was needed for the location of staff and to provide the necessary facilities. In 1960 the Agricultural Research Council established the present Weed Research Organization at Begbroke, near Oxford, with Dr. Woodford as director. The existence and success of the Organization must be credited to a very large extent to Dr. Woodford. With typical foresight he recognized the need for, and was determined to bring into existence, a single organization to co-ordinate research and information in this rapidly moving and highly technical branch of agricultural science. Dr. Woodford's appointment to Hurley is consistent with the pioneering outlook which took him as a boy to Canada in 1930 to learn to farm and where he later obtained an M.Sc. in the University of Alberta in plant physiology. In Canada he had the opportunity of observing the development of scientific organizations unhampered by tradition, an experience which has had a marked effect on his thought and actions during his fifteen years' pioneer work in the field of weed control. Dr. Woodford's outlook and experience, together with his interest in farming and his research work in plant physiology in Canada and later at the Royal College of Science in London, will stand him in good stead in his new appointment.

Physiology in the Queen's University of Belfast:

Prof. I. C. Roddie

DR. IAN C. RODDIE, reader in physiology in the Queen's University of Belfast, and consultant in physiology to the Northern Ireland Hospitals Authority, has been appointed at the age of thirty-five to the Dunville chair of physiology in the University in which he graduated in both science and medicine after a distinguished undergraduate career. The investigation into the nervous control of the blood vessels of the human limbs which he began in 1954 did much to clarify and define the independence of the nervous controls of the muscular and cutaneous circulations and disclosed the important role of low-pressure baroreceptors in the reflex control of the muscular circulation. In 1957 he was awarded a Beit Memorial fellowship, but resigned this on appointment to a lectureship. Dr. Roddie spent 1960-61 as a Harkness Fellow of the Commonwealth Fund in the University of Washington and started his present work in which the activity of vascular smooth muscle is assessed by the recording of intracellular electrical potentials. This work promises to provide a more direct answer than has hitherto been available to questions of vascular control. Dr. Roddie was Arris and Gale lecturer to the Royal College of Surgeons in 1962, and Ontario Heart Foundation lecturer this year. He has been awarded the degrees of M.D. with gold medal and D.Sc. for his research work. The Dunville chair of physiology was previously occupied by Prof. A. D. M. Greenfield, who was appointed to the chair of physiology at St. Mary's Hospital Medical School, London, as announced earlier this year (*Nature*, 201, 978; 1964).

Education in France

UNDER the title *The State and Education in France* the Press and Information Section of the French Embassy in London has issued a pamphlet summarizing the ruling ideas of the new Education Act of 1959, which came into force in October 1960 (Pp. 15. London: Ambassade de

France, Service de Presse et d'Information, 1964). It has been somewhat modified since August 1963 and some applications are still at the experimental stage. The first effect of the Act is to raise the school-leaving age for all children from 14 to 16, and this will take effect as from 1967. The new structure provides for comparatively unified instruction for children of 11-15 during the four years of the observation cycle, only the 5-6 per cent maladjusted children requiring special education being excluded. The others are distributed between three types of education: a long general course, a short general course, and an intermediate course of two years, followed by two further years of a terminal course. Twenty comprehensive institutions known as colleges of secondary education are this year being started in an experiment in combining these three types of courses in one building and under the same headship. Technical education begins at the close of the first cycle of secondary education, and the long technical course at present given in the technical *lycées* is being removed, but they will continue to give instruction in technology providing the theoretical basis for more advanced technical training. Private education is for the most part associated with religious institutions, and its 1.7 million pupils in 13,000 institutions and taught by 78,000 teachers (40,000 secular) compares with just more than 9 million in State institutions. Besides agricultural education, depending partly on the Ministry of Agriculture, special institutions are being developed for the mentally retarded, for the maladjusted and spastics, for those with defects of sight, speech and hearing, and for young delinquents. There are also 'social formation' courses organized by the State, and the work of the schools is supported by school medical services and by school and recreational guidance services.

The Science Council of Japan

THE annual report of the Science Council of Japan for 1961-62 gives a brief account of the history and functions of the Council, which was formally established in 1949, and reports on its activities during the year (Pp. 95. Tokyo: Science Council of Japan). It is expected that legislation of critical importance to scientific research will be enacted very soon, and the Council believes that it should guide research policy in Japan. The main interest of the report lies in the account of this law, intended to formulate the policies which the Government should follow for the sound development of science. The purpose and social function of scientific research are first emphasized; a second article formulates the basic prerequisites, stressing first the freedom and independence of scientific research workers, and secondly, the importance of making the results freely available. A third article insists that Government administration of research must provide the essential conditions in accordance with the particular field of science and the stage it has reached. Next, the organization for scientific research is outlined in seven articles, covering universities, colleges, research institutions and academic societies, and stressing the importance of free interchange and co-operation and the functions of the Science Council of Japan. Next comes an article stressing the flexibility of budgeting and the importance of varied sources of support. One dealing with the working conditions and treatment of scientific research workers follows, and then four further articles deal with international scientific co-operation and the exchange of scientists and scientific information. The remaining two sections of the law deal with the training of scientific research workers and with the functions of the Science Council of Japan, which will make a statement concerning the responsibilities of science when the new law is enacted. The proposed statement stresses the awareness of each scientist of the aim and social responsibilities of scientific research, and insists that scientists should have the responsibility to protest against any threat to freedom of scientific research, to point out any harmful results pro-