NEWS and VIEWS

Director of Building Research, Ministry of Technology : Dr. Frederick Measham Lea, C.B., C.B.E.

Dr. F. M. Lea relinquishes his duties as director of building research in the Ministry of Technology on December 31, having reached retirement age. During his twenty-year tenure, the work of the Building Research Station has been greatly extended in scope, now ranging from research on the use of materials to structures, soil mechanics, heating, ventilating, lighting and acoustics, mechanical plant for building, operational and economics research and studies of user needs. Although often accused of technological backwardness, the industry has, in fact, made very rapid application of much of the work of the Station, particularly in the newer fields of research on mechanical plant and on costs and economics. In addition to this national activity, Dr. Lea has taken an active part in international collaboration in building research and he has served as president or as a member of council of most of the organizations working in this field. His early work at the Station, before appointment as director, was on the chemistry of cement and concrete and he has throughout retained a special interest in this field. It has attracted to him a number of awards, culminating in the Walter C. Voss Award of the American Society for Testing Materials, in 1963. His text-book *Chemistry of Cement and Concrete* is an established source of reference. He became a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chemistry in 1936. He was appointed O.B.E. in 1944, C.B.E. in 1952 and C.B. in 1960, elected an Honorary Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1947 and an Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Builders in 1965.

Dr. J. C. Weston

Dr. J. C. Weston has been appointed director of the Ministry of Technology's Building Research Station at Garston, Watford, Hertfordshire, in succession to Dr. Lea. The appointment takes effect from January 1, 1966. Dr. Weston joined the Building Research Station in 1947 as a principal scientific officer, and was promoted to senior principal scientific officer in 1953. His concern was with building production methods and costs. Since 1959 Dr. Weston has been, as a deputy chief scientific officer, group head of the Station's Building Operations and Economics, User Requirements and Mathematical Services Divisions. He has been on secondment to the National Building Agency as chief executive of the Operational Division since June 1964. Dr. Weston was educated at Nottingham and obtained his degree at London and his Ph.D. for work on temperature changes accompanying magnetization processes in ferromagnetic substances. During and immediately after the Second World War, Dr. Weston was with the Admiralty Scientific Service. He was engaged in work on torpedoes and mine detection. This was followed by a year at The Plessey Company, Ltd., where he was responsible for the Physics Research Laboratory.

Director of the Scottish Plant Breeding Station : Dr. J. W. Gregor, C.B.E.

Dr. J. W. Gregor retired on September 30 from the post of director of the Scottish Plant Breeding Station, Pentlandfield, Roslin, Midlothian. After taking his Ph.D. at the University of Edinburgh in 1925 he joined the staff of the Station as chief assistant. In 1939 he was awarded a D.Sc. and was appointed director in 1950. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1957 and was awarded a C.B.E. in 1961. Internationally known for his experiments on the genetics of wild populations of *Plantago maritima*, he endeavoured to show the agricultural significance of his genecological studies by relating them to pasture improvement in the Scottish hills. Always interested in the nomenclature of plants, he has made a number of contributions to the literature on ecotypic differentiation and the recognition of intra-specific variation in plants. Among many consultative groups on which he served was the International Commission for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants which produced the *International Code of Nomenclature*. Dr. Gregor has been succeeded by Mr. N. W. Simmonds.

Mr. N. W. Simmonds

Mr. N. W. Simmonds, head of the Department of Potato Genetics at the John Innes Institute, Hertford, has been appointed to the post of director of the Scottish Plant Breeding Station, in succession to Dr. J. W. Gregor. Mr. Simmonds was educated at Whitgift and Downing College, Cambridge, and then went to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Trinidad, in 1944 under a Colonial scholarship. After holding a lectureship in botany at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Trinidad, he became senior cytogeneticist in the Banana Research Scheme and Regional Research Centre; a new tetraploid variety of banana was produced by the Scheme during his tenure of the post. In more recent years he has been consultant in sugar-cane breeding in the West Indies. He returned to Britain in 1959 to become head of the Department of Potato Genetics at the John Innes Institute. Mr. Simmonds's botanical and plant-breeding investigations have taken him on extensive travels in Europe, Asia, Africa and America, and, while his main interests lie in the cytogenetics and evolution of crop plants (especially of bananas and potatoes), he has also published widely in the fields of ethnobotany, systematics and phenol biochemistry.

Psychology in the University of Reading : Prof. Magdalen D. Vernon

The retirement of Prof. M. D. Vernon from the chair of psychology in the University of Reading constitutes a landmark not only in her own working life, but in the development of the subject in Britain. She started work in Sir Frederic Bartlett's laboratory at Cambridge in 1921 as an Industrial Health Research Board investigator at the beginning of the remarkable period of progress there between the two Wars. She remained—later as a Medical Research Council staff member—until 1946, when the late Prof. A. W. P. Wolters secured her services as a lecturer at Reading. Appointed senior lecturer in 1955 and reader in 1956, she succeeded Prof. R. C. Oldfield in the chair in that year. Her massive contributions to the study of visual perception and especially of the processes involved in reading, both in experimental papers and in books such as *Visual Perception*, had already earned her an international reputation before she went to Reading. During her twenty years there that reputation has much increased, while her work in other fields, such as the motivation of children, has widened its basis. Her unfailingly high standards in research and in teaching have been a spur to her colleagues and students alike, and if many perhaps have found them difficult to emulate, much excellent work and an acknowledged distinction have been their fruit. Prof. Vernon's astringent good sense on academic and other committees has always been effective and deeply appreciated by her colleagues. Her period at Reading has spanned a time of very considerable expansion of the subject, with a large increase