Newton's chemical theories. He wrote several papers about Priestley, but in later years he concentrated on the French and Scottish schools. All aspects of Lavoisier's career are considered in *Antoine Lavoisier, Scientist, Economist, Social Reformer* (1952), and McKie was largely responsible for negotiations leading to the preservation in France of Lavoisier's apparatus. For this and other services to the Académie des Sciences he was appointed Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur. The Royal Society is also indebted to him for a detailed discussion of its origins, published in 1960. A lover of books, McKie had a great knowledge of the bibliography of science, and he wrote scholarly introductions to reprints of works by Rey, Boyle and Lavoisier, and to a finely produced transcript of a set of notes taken during Black's lectures.

McKie was one of the first full-time historians of science in any country, and he lived to see the subject attain full academic and professional status. He received many honours, but he probably derived most satisfaction from the knowledge that former students of his department are now teaching the history of science in universities, colleges and schools throughout Britain and also overseas.

W. A. SMEATON

University News :

London

DR E. H. ANDREWS, reader in science of materials at Queen Mary College, has been appointed to the chair of materials tenable at that college.

Appointments

PROFESSOR MICHAEL ABERCROMBIE has been appointed director of the Strangeways Research Laboratory as from July 1, 1970. He will succeed Dame Honor Fell.

THE following appointments have been made to the World Meteorological Organization Secretariat: *Dr Kaare Langlo*, at present chief of the Technical Division, is to be director of the Scientific and Technical Department; *Dr Hermann Sebastian*, at present chief of the Technical Co-operation Division, is to be director of the Technical Co-operation Department; *Dr G. G. Tarakanov*, at present special adviser on scientific matters to the secretary-general, is to be special assistant to the secretary-general for technical policies and programmes; *Mr B. Zavos*, at present chief of the Planning and Co-ordination Group at the National Environmental Satellite Centre, Environmental Science Services Administration, Washington DC, is to be special assistant to the secretary-general for World Weather Watch Management and Co-ordination.

Announcements

THE following have been made honorary fellows of the Royal Aeronautical Society: *Sir George Dowty*, chairman and managing director of the Dowty Group Ltd., in recognition of his services to aviation, especially in the design and development of aircraft accessory systems; *Professor H. J. Van Der Maas*, professor of aeronautics at the Technological University of Delft, in recognition of his contributions to aeronautics, especially in advancing international co-operation and goodwill; *Dr Barnes Wallis*, chief of the Department of Aeronautical Research and Development, BAC (Operating), Ltd., and special director, BAC Weybridge, for his contributions to aeronautical design over many years.

THE first Louisa Gross Horwitz Prize for basic research in biology or biochemistry has been awarded by Columbia University to Dr Luis F. Leloir, at present director of the Institute of Biochemistry of the Campomar Foundation and head of the Department of Biochemistry in the University of Buenos Aires. The prize of \$25,000 was given in recognition of his discovery of the nucleoside diphosphate sugars and the demonstration of their important role in the biosynthesis of sucrose, the plant starches, liver glycogen and other polysaccharides.

CORRESPONDENCE

No More Coal

SIR,—The comments on the coal industry in your issue of November 18 (*Nature*, 216, 627; 1967) may give a misleading impression of the future of this industry and of the attitude of those responsible for its leadership. One chronic problem facing the NCB is that while we are in the middle of a productivity and rationalization drive—which we are winning—we are continuously subjected to press comments which can only damage confidence in the industry's prospects.

We spend about £5 million a year on our research and development programme. There are some extremely exciting projects, especially involving new uses for coal and the up-grading of by-products and waste materials. To succeed in these projects we need not only a steady flow of good scientists, but also the interest of scientists outside the industry who may be able to help us.

We submitted a memorandum on these aspects of our research and development programme, covering our utilization and diversification activities, to the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology. I enclose a copy of this and would be glad to supply one to anyone who cares to write to me.

Your heading "No More Coal" is, of course, belied by the figures included in the White Paper Fuel Policy (now being revised because of devaluation), and Mr Richard Marsh, the Minister of Power, has himself always been at great pains to emphasize what a large industry this will be even in the light of the White Paper forecasts. For example, between now and the end of 1980 at least 1,500 million tons of coal will be required and the turnover of the industry will total something like £10,000 million, with our increasing diversifications. But the NCB does not accept the inevitability of the decline forecast in the White Paper. You say that the White Paper figures on nuclear power "might almost convince Lord Robens". The figures to which you refer, however, are merely a new set of calculations, admittedly of greater sophistication, but they are not based on any more positive evidence about the presumed performance of the AGR nuclear power stations. Now that the Select Committee Report has been published our attitudes and arguments are fully available and would justify the closest consideration by all scientists and engineers. It is most important to appreciate that our case is not by any means related merely to social considerations, important—and expensive—though these are. We believe that coal can still be economically competitive throughout the 1970s.

Arguments for this belief and the reasons why previous studies have in our view been inadequate are complex. In the Select Committee Report there are three contributions from the NCB which set out the position. The last of these—and indeed the last page in the Report—ends as follows: "Conclusions. In view of the technical and economic doubts about the future performance of AGR stations, the NCB think that the proper course is now for an independent technical expert to make a full assessment of the nuclear power programme, supported by an independent financial assessment."

We should obviously not be asking for such an examination if we were not fully confident that our views would be sustained.

Yours faithfully,

L. GRAINGER

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