

University News :

Bradford

DR J. B. HELLIWELL, at present reader in gas dynamics in the University of Strathclyde, has been appointed to the chair of mathematics in the Board of Studies in Engineering, and Dr G. Brown, at present reader in physics, has been appointed professor of nuclear physics. Professor D. C. Johnson, visiting professor at the university, has been appointed to the chair of industrial technology. Professor H. T. Stamboliev, dean of the Faculty of Technology at the University of Skopje, has been appointed to the visiting chair of chemical engineering for the session 1967-68, and Dr M. Green, a director of Zenith Radio Research Corporation (UK) Ltd, has been appointed visiting professor of physical chemistry for a two year period commencing in October this year.

Dundee

PROFESSOR A. R. MITCHELL, formerly reader in applied mathematics in the University of St Andrews, has been appointed to the newly created third chair of mathematics.

London

THE title of professor of experimental pathology has been conferred on Dr Lynne Reid in respect of her post at the Institute of Diseases of the Chest.

Ulster

MR ALAN MILTON, vice-principal and acting principal of the University College of Rhodesia, has been appointed professor of education and director of the Education Centre.

Appointments

MR A. S. ASHTON, a director of Esso Petroleum Co Ltd, and Mr H. W. Morris, deputy chairman of ICI Fibres Ltd, have been appointed members of the Shipbuilding Industry Board, which was established under the Shipbuilding Industry Act, 1967.

Announcements

THE Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has placed an order with Messrs Ferguson Brothers (Port Glasgow) Ltd for a new fisheries research vessel. The vessel, which will replace the present research vessel, Ernest Holt, is expected to be in service in late 1969.

DR LESLIE MULLINS, head of Kodak's technical services to marketing, delivered the Mehl Honor Lecture at the 1967 Conference of the American Society for Non-Destructive Testing. Dr Mullins, the first British scientist who has been invited to present this lecture, spoke on "The Development of Non-Destructive Testing".

THE Drummond Managing Trustees have awarded Mr A. P. Nandi Majumdar a Drummond Scholarship in nutrition for the year 1967-68. The scholarship will be held at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Meetings

HEATING and Ventilation for a Human Environment, November 1-2, Institution of Mechanical Engineers (R. S. Glynn, The Institution of Mechanical Engineers, 1 Birdcage Walk, London, SW1).

PSYCHOSOMATIC Disorders, November 10-11, London (Dr A. H. Crisp, c/o Academic Psychiatric Unit, Middlesex Hospital, London, W1).

AIR Navigation Conference, November 14-December 13, Montreal (International Civil Aviation Organization, International Aviation Building, 1080 University Street, Montreal).

ERRATUM. In the communication "Transformation of the Histochemical Profile of Skeletal Muscle by 'Foreign' Innervation", by G. Karpati and W. K. Engel (*Nature*, 215, 1509; 1967), the two photographs appeared in reverse order, so that Fig. 2 was printed above the legend to Fig. 1 and vice versa.

ERRATUM. In the communication "Markovian Models of Dialogic Time Patterns", by J. Jaffe, S. Feldstein and L. Cassotta (*Nature*, 216, 93; 1967), the third sentence following equation (1) should read "One consequence of the model is that the probability of reaching any state j from any state i in exactly n steps is given by the ij th term . . .".

ERRATUM. In the communication "Electron Thermodynamic Nonequilibrium in p - n Junctions", by M. A. Melehy (*Nature*, 215, 1251; 1967), equation (7) should read $\alpha = (I/I^*)$, $p_e = (1 + \alpha) p_n$. The title of the second column of Table 1 should be p_n (cm⁻³).

CORRESPONDENCE

Origin of Plastids

SIR,—I am prompted to write to you briefly on reading, I think for the third time, in the pages of *Nature* the statement, this time from your Cell Biology Correspondent (216, 14; 1967), "Ever since the discovery that mitochondria and chloroplasts contain . . . there has been speculation that these organelles evolved from symbiotic bacteria . . ." This is an example of a tendency manifested especially by non-biologists now working in the biological field to imagine that the new methods now being applied to biological problems are providing answers and suggesting hypotheses which the older "classical" biologists have not and could not have conceived. I believe the idea that this speculation is a new one should be killed. The idea that both chloroplasts and mitochondria might be organelles evolved from symbiotic bacteria was very much in the air thirty or forty years ago and precisely for the same reason stated by your correspondent—namely, on account of the genetic continuity of both these organelles; and what is new now is not this speculation but the molecular basis on which it can be made, and this seems to me a trivial distinction. Reference to this speculation can be found for mitochondria on page 19 of the book *Protoplasm*, by W. Seifriz, published in 1936. I cannot for the moment lay my hands on a similar statement for chloroplasts, but I recall that in 1935 I attended the Saturday evening seminars organized for his students by Professor O. F. Curtis at Cornell University, during one of which we discussed the possibility that chloroplasts may be derived from symbiotic bacteria. This discussion had then been a feature of the seminars for several years past. On coming to Leeds I found precisely the same speculation being placed before his students by Dr (later Professor) W. H. Pearsall and I have no doubt that the same speculation was rife in almost all botany departments in the world at that time.

This is itself a trivial matter, but it is one example in which less than justice is done to the older workers. I believe it is important to keep in mind that development in science is a continuous process; and that younger workers are well advised to keep a wary eye on what was done by their forebears. As a younger worker I was brought up short in this regard both by Professor G. van Iterson, jun., in Holland, and by Professor I. W. Bailey of Harvard. This is a lesson I have never forgotten.

Yours sincerely,

R. D. PRESTON

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