

## News and Views

## Prof. Robert Chodat

THE recipient of this year's Linnean Medal awarded by the Linnean Society of London is Prof. Robert Chodat of Geneva. Unfortunately, he was unable to be present at the anniversary meeting held on May 24 and the medal was received on his behalf by the Swiss Minister. In the present state of specialisation, it is difficult to cover much of the field of botany and Prof. Chodat is one of the very few who can be considered a master in most branches. His work on the systematics of Polygalaceæ and their geographical distribution, and his ecological accounts of the vegetation of Paraguay explored by him in 1914 and of Portugal, Spain and Majorca which he visited with his students, are of great merit. In his laboratory at Geneva he elaborated the methods of obtaining pure cultures of Algæ now in general use, and his papers on Algæ, culminating in his monograph on polymorphism, have made him a recognised authority on the subject. More recently he has turned his attention to Fungi, particularly the organisms of fermentation, where his knowledge of chemistry and physiology has enabled him to make important advances. It is not so much the minutiae of a subject as the broad principles that have attracted him, as is seen in his critical study of the palæozoic Pteropsida and in his address on the conception of species in modern botany. In genetics his contributions, though not numerous, have been fundamental. It is natural that he should be a successful teacher and his admirable "Principes de Botanique" reveal his wide and philosophic outlook. Geneva has always been famous for its botanists and Robert Chodat is a worthy successor to de Saussure and the de Candolles.

## Prof. William A. Bone, F.R.S.

Prof. William A. Bone, of the Imperial College of Science and Technology, South Kensington, has been awarded the medal of the Society of Chemical Industry in recognition of his researches into the mechanism of combustion. This medal, which was instituted in 1896, is awarded periodically for conspicuous service rendered to applied chemistry, by research, discovery, invention or improvements in processes. It was in 1898, when Prof. Bone was lecturer in chemistry and metallurgy at Owens College, Manchester, that he started systematic research on the combustion of hydrocarbons and the influence of hot surfaces in promoting gaseous combustion, for which research he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1905. In 1911 he was awarded the Howard Potts gold medal of the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia. In 1912 he began to organise and direct the new Department of Chemical Technology at the Imperial College, South Kensington. Prof. Bone's researches have comprised the chemical constitution of coal, surface combustion, gaseous combustion and explosions under high pressure, the photographic investigation of flame propagation during gaseous explosions, the com-

busation of hydrocarbons and blast furnace reactions. A lecture on July 12 entitled "Forty Years of Combustion Research" by Prof. Bone is one of the features of the annual meeting of the Society of Chemical Industry to be held in Newcastle on July 10-14.

## Academic Assistance Council

THE present state of affairs in universities in Germany has raised in acute form the position of many scientific workers who, by reason of race, religion or political views, are unable to carry on their investigations in their own country. While no doubt universities in other countries will offer facilities to such displaced workers, it must be remembered that their resources are limited and in most cases already allotted. An Academic Assistance Council has therefore been formed in Great Britain, to co-operate with similar bodies in other countries in collecting funds to provide maintenance for displaced university teachers and investigators and in placing them in universities and institutions where they will be able to pursue their work. An appeal for funds, addressed to "all who are concerned for academic freedom and the security of learning", and signed by distinguished men of science and letters, has been issued, in which it is emphasised that the formation of the Council implies no reflection on political issues in other countries but is solely an attempt to relieve suffering, prevent waste of valuable talent and defend learning. The Royal Society has placed office accommodation at the disposal of the Council, and Sir William Beveridge and Prof. C. S. Gibson are acting as honorary secretaries. Communications and contributions should be sent to them at the Royal Society, Burlington House, London, W.1.

## The Old Ashmolean, Oxford

THE celebrations, arranged by Dr. R. T. Gunther, of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Old Ashmolean on May 21, 1683, brought together a large gathering, which included representatives from a number of universities and scientific institutions in Great Britain and the United States. The Royal Society and the Linnean Society sent messages of congratulation, the latter referring particularly to the original specimens of the Tradescants forming part of the Lewis Evans collection. On May 21, a private reception was held in the Old Ashmolean building by Dr. R. T. Gunther. The guests took tea afterwards in Exeter College Hall, following the route taken by the Duke of York and his retinue in 1683, after the original opening of the Museum. On May 22, a private luncheon-party assembled in Wadham College Hall, and a toast in memory of Elias Ashmole was submitted. Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins, who was among the guests, referred to the desirability of a fuller realisation of the value of historic science as an intellectual equipment and implement in current methods of