

NEWS and VIEWS

Scientific Civil Service: Promotion of Individual Research Workers

IN *Nature* of April 5, 1947 (p. 464), some details were given of a number of members of the Scientific Civil Service who, as individual research workers of exceptional quality, had been appointed to special posts created under provisions included in the Government White Paper on the Scientific Civil Service (Cmd. 6679) published in 1945. It has now been announced that, on a further review, the under-mentioned members of the Scientific Civil Service have similarly been promoted to the grade of senior principal scientific officer (inclusive salary scale £1,320-£1,520) with effect from January 1, 1948.

H. Barrell (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research), the authority in Great Britain on the determination of standards of length in terms of wave-lengths of light; he has carried out much work in interferometry and its application to the measurement of accurate gauges; W. Binks (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research), who has made important contributions on the measurement of the intensity of the ionizing radiations produced by X-rays and radioactive substances; he was largely responsible for work which led to the internationally accepted recommendations for the protection of workers in this field; H. Carmichael (Ministry of Supply), who has carried out important investigations into cosmic rays and is at present engaged on instrumentation for atomic energy research; Dr. C. M. Cawley (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research), a chemist who has carried out outstanding work during the last eighteen years on the mechanism of hydrogenation of tar, oils, and pure compounds; on the production of toluene from cresol; on the development of gelled-fuels for flame throwers; and on the extraction of benzol from coal gas, and on wax from British peats and lignites; I. Fagelston (Admiralty), a chemist who has made outstanding contributions on propulsion problems in relation to torpedoes and surface and underwater craft; A. Forster (Ministry of Supply), an organic chemist and engineer with outstanding knowledge of high explosives and propellants, and of their manufacture; J. K. Hardy (Ministry of Supply), an engineering physicist who has made important contributions to the study of de-icing and to many other subjects; A. W. Hothersall (Ministry of Supply), who is a leading authority on electro-deposition of metals, with particular reference to resistance to wear and erosion; B. Pontecorvo (Ministry of Supply), who was responsible for pile development in Canada and is now conducting fundamental atomic energy research in nuclear physics; Dr. R. H. Purcell (Admiralty), a physical chemist who has been concerned with the practical application of physics and chemistry to a very wide field of engineering problems; H. A. Sloman (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research), who has carried out pioneer work on the production and properties of pure beryllium, and, recently, on the analysis of gaseous impurities in metals, especially in steel and by the development of the now widely used vacuum-fusion method; A. G. Tarrant (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research), a physicist who has contributed outstandingly to the solution of research problems in road construction, specializing particularly in the development of equipment for studying the deteriora-

tion of road surfaces; during the War he developed novel types of accelerometer for examining the movement of gun mechanisms and the flight of bombs and underwater projectiles.

British Somaliland and its Development

THE report on the general survey of British Somaliland, 1945 (Burao: General Survey. 3s. 6d.), prepared following the approved scheme under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, indicates that considerable areas of the country are almost completely unknown. 1945 was a good average year as regards rainfall and grazing, and in the geological exploration of the Onkhar area an oil seepage was found, of which 800 square miles were mapped. This area is well watered and there are valuable belts of Damas trees in the coastal lowlands. A potential motor track from Dur Elan to Onkhar was discovered. The original purpose of the survey was the collection, co-ordination and distribution of data from existing knowledge, and also the continued collection of further data, especially as regards topography, meteorology, geology, botany, zoology and tribes and their stock, so as to fill in the gaps in the structure of a composite research scheme and eventually to compile a full account of the general geography of British Somaliland on which wise development could be based. Detail is included in this report as an example of the sort of information which general survey officers are expected to collect, and some notes on the methods of work are also included for the use of colleagues in Somaliland, including native assistant surveyors.

A Gazetteer of British Somali Place Names (Burao: General Survey. 1s.), covering British Somaliland and Grazing Areas, September 1943-February 1945-December 1945, has been prepared by the Survey Department of the Protectorate Government and published separately, to facilitate the location of place-names which may or may not be recorded on existing maps, and to provide an authoritative foundation for fixing as closely as possible the spelling of these names according to the recommendations of the Royal Geographical Society.

Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land

THE National Geographic Society, Smithsonian Institution and the Commonwealth of Australia jointly are sending a scientific expedition to Arnhem Land at the close of the rainy season in March. The expedition will study the aborigines and the plant and animal life, including marine life, throughout the dry season, which normally ends late in October. Arnhem Land, which is an aboriginal reserve, has no charted trails suitable for motor transport; the expedition's approach will be by small schooner to coastal stations on Van Diemen Gulf, the Arafura Sea, and the Gulf of Carpentaria. Natives will be enlisted as porters for journeys inland. Of five bases selected for the expedition's use, one especially suited for study of marine life is on Groote Eylandt just off the east coast in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Other bases are at the heads of navigation of mainland streams, where Christian missions established early in the century have been allowed to remain. The leader of the expedition will be Charles Pearcey Mountford, ethnologist of the South Australia Museum, Adelaide. Mr. Mountford, who has taken part in various anthropological and ethnological expeditions in Australia, is an authority on aboriginal art, customs and culture. Other members of the