

material in the Kew Herbarium, and Dalziel had a wide field knowledge in West Africa.

But it was the appendix to this flora, entitled "The Useful Plants of West Tropical Africa" (1937), which came to be Dalziel's *magnum opus*. The amount of information and local names he collected was amazing; there were 10,000 vernacular names from Nigeria alone. His information covered all the West African Colonies, including much information from the French West African Colonies. His thorough recording of the medicinal uses, for example, could only be done effectively at that stage by one who, like Dalziel, combined a thorough knowledge of both the plant life and the tropical diseases of the area, together with the necessary persistence and thoroughness in recording his own observations and those supplied to him by others. His correspondence during these many years of compilation must have been immense, and his critical faculty in dealing with it adequately must have been exceptional.

His work is a sound basis for all future work on the uses of West African plants, and he quotes all the authorities he used. This work was his main scientific work, done with endless care, at financial loss to himself, and with inadequate recognition in his life-time. Dalziel has put into the hands of educated Africans, as well as into those of European research workers, the requisite means for further research in the subject, which is of vital importance for the future welfare of West Africans themselves. In his work of recording the medicinal uses in particular, he has laid a foundation on which those of us who follow him can build with confidence.

F. R. IRVINE

Mr. G. L. Overton

MR. GEORGE LEONARD OVERTON, who had been keeper of the Department of Air and Water Trans-

port at the Science Museum during 1926-35, died at his home in London on May 15. Born at Coventry on May 18, 1875, he was educated at Bradford Technical College and passed to the Royal College of Science, London, where in 1897 he graduated in physics and for a year held the post of assistant in the Astronomical Department.

In 1898 Overton was appointed to the then South Kensington Museum by competitive examination—in which he figured with high distinction—and was concerned with the presentation of various scientific subjects, notably time measurement, which for him was a hobby as well as a serious study. He was a fellow of the British Horological Institute and of the Physical Society, and in 1922 published a book on clocks and watches.

Overton had the analytical type of mind that is appropriate to museum work. He was a purist; not only in choice of words, but also in all matters pertaining to the restoration and preservation of exhibits. His regard for accuracy was so great that it tended to limit his output; but the official publications of which he was the author evinced a standard of precision rare even in technical literature.

A serious operation during the latter years of his service handicapped him, but it made his admirable custodianship of the collections for which he was responsible even more praiseworthy. He was one of the very few officers surviving who constituted the higher technical staff of the Science Museum on its separation from the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1909 and inception as a separate entity. The tradition so ably established by Overton and his contemporaries is the foundation upon which that national museum of science and industry is to-day erected. All who knew him, admired his knowledge, and experienced the kindness and generosity of his personal relationship, will deeply regret his passing.

M. J. B. DAVY

NEWS and VIEWS

Royal Society of London: New Foreign Members

ON May 27, Prof. D. W. Bronk, Prof. L. E. J. Brouwer, Prof. M. J. G. C. Caullery and Prof. L. C. Pauling were elected foreign members of the Royal Society of London.

Prof. D. W. Bronk is known not only for his own researches in biophysics but also as the director of the Eldridge Reeves Foundation for Medical Physics since its foundation in 1929. This Foundation forms a part of the University of Pennsylvania, and has acquired an international reputation under his direction and become a flourishing centre of research under his genial and skilled guidance and produced many distinguished pupils. In his own work, his early physical training shows in the precision and definition which he has brought to many biological problems. His particular contributions have been on electrical phenomena in nerve, following his work with Adrian in 1929 on the mode of discharge of impulses by motor nerve cells; he elucidated the functions of the carotid sinus and brought light to many problems of sensory physiology and of synaptic transmission. His work during the War was concerned with many applications of science to the Services, especially those relating to night vision. He was indefatigable in travelling to theatres of war and

across the Atlantic as a co-ordinator of research between the laboratory and the field.

L. E. J. Brouwer, professor of mathematics in the University of Amsterdam, may be regarded, along with Cantor and Poincaré, as one of the founders of modern topology if only on account of his proof in 1911 that dimensionality is a topological invariant. Brouwer's life work has, however, been concerned with a theory of the nature of mathematics, which he put forward in its first state in 1907. This theory, known as intuitionism, denies in particular the universality of the law of the excluded middle, and has aroused much controversy.

Prof. Maurice Caullery is the most distinguished of French zoologists. During his long and active career, his students have included many of the present holders of zoological chairs in France and many other well-known biologists, including some in Great Britain. Until 1939, he held the chair of biology at the Sorbonne. He is a member of the Institut de France, member of the Belgian Royal Academy, foreign member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, LL.D. of St. Andrews, and has been exchange professor of Harvard University. He was president of the Société de Zoologie and of the Société de Biologie of France. He is president of