

Maurice possessed exceptional literary gifts and contributed reviews, letters and articles to various publications, including *The Times*, the *New Statesman*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Field* and *Zoo Life*. Two of his main interests are evident in his volumes "Sometimes an Angler", a collection of fishing memories, and "The Wisdom of the Ass", a series of essays on animal behaviour. A translation of his Belgian address containing a philosophical exposition of his attitude towards wild life was the subject of a leader in *The Times*.

EDWARD HINDLE

Mr. M. J. B. Davy

MR. MAURICE JOHN BERNARD DAVY, keeper of the Department of Air and Water Transport at the Science Museum, London, who died in hospital on June 1 at the age of fifty-seven, was a well-known authority on the history and development of aeronautics in all its branches. Born on November 12, 1892, he was the only son of the late Lieut.-Colonel J. J. Davy. He was educated at Douai Abbey and by private tuition. In the First World War he became a pilot officer in the Royal Flying Corps, and this, no doubt, was the genesis of his devotion to aeronautics.

When he entered the Science Museum in 1920, under the directorship of Sir Henry Lyons, there was already a small embryo collection entitled "Aerial Navigation", which he, more than anyone else, laboured to develop into the present Aeronautical Collection, by general consent one of the finest of its kind in the world.

Davy's principal contributions to aeronautical history will be found in the series of official handbooks which he prepared for the Science Museum. Soon after his appointment, there appeared in 1922 the first separate catalogue of the Aeronautics Collection, to which a supplement was added in 1924. The handbook "Heavier-than-air Aircraft" appeared in 1929, and has run to several editions. There followed "The Propulsion of Aircraft" (with Mr. G. T. Richards) in 1930, a special monograph in 1931 involving a great deal of original research on the pioneer work of Henson and Stringfellow, and "Lighter-than-air Aircraft" in 1934.

Davy's approach was both that of technician and philosopher. In his major works, such as the "Interpretive History of Flight" first published in 1937, and "Air Power and Civilization" which appeared in 1941, he sought not merely to record the history of aeronautics, but also to interpret its sociological implications. This same attitude of mind is apparent in the thoughtful article "Flight in Nature and in Human Society" which he contributed in 1948 to the *Journal of the Royal Aeronautical Society*.

Davy's life work, embodied in the aeronautical collections of the Science Museum, is a testimony to his industry, enthusiasm and ability which will last so long as the Museum stands. Those who had the privilege of working with him will sadly miss a personality of great charm and the counsel of a respected colleague. He was a fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society and an Officer of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

H. P. SPRATT

NEWS and VIEWS

Geology at Oxford: Prof. J. A. Douglas

WITH his retirement this year from the chair of geology of Oxford, Prof. J. A. Douglas ends a distinguished association of forty-eight years in the University, commencing as undergraduate, continuing as demonstrator, and finally, in 1937, succeeding to the chair in place of W. J. Sollas, who had remained in office until his death at the age of eighty-seven. Prof. Douglas is a master in an unusual degree of all aspects of geology, and his pleasant temperament and capacity for exposition have made him a teacher who has had an important influence on geological learning at Oxford through the years. His researches have covered British Jurassic stratigraphy, palaeontology and economic geology. He carried out geological exploration in the Andes of Peru and Bolivia during 1910-12 and again in 1929. He has been palaeontological adviser to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. since 1922 and has travelled extensively in the Middle East; and this association has supplied material for important palaeontological papers. Prof. Douglas has served on the Council of the Geological Society of London for twenty years, for seven years as secretary, and twice as vice-president. He has been a fellow of University College, Oxford, since 1937. In the First World War, after serving with the Gordon Highlanders and 172 Tunnelling Coy., Royal Engineers, he was appointed instructor in military mining at Chatham. In the Second World War he commanded the Oxford City Battalion of the Home Guard.

The Department of Geology has been greatly handicapped for many years by inadequate accommodation; but, thanks to the initiative of Prof. Douglas and financial support by the Shell Petroleum Co., a new building was completed last year and formally opened by the vice-chancellor (see *Nature*, July 23, 1949, p. 152). It is sad that Prof. Douglas has had so short a time to enjoy this excellent building; but it will remain as a memorial to the great part which he has played in geological education in Oxford over so many years.

Prof. L. R. Wager, F.R.S.

PROF. L. R. WAGER, who succeeds Prof. Douglas, was educated at Leeds Grammar School and Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he was awarded an open scholarship in 1923. Following his B.A. degree in 1926, he worked for three years in the Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge, as a Goldsmiths' Company's research student. His work at Cambridge gave early indication of his wide interests in geology, and his researches ranged from metasomatism in the Whin Sill and metamorphism of the Connemara region to the tectonics of the Craven area. In 1929 he was appointed lecturer in mineralogy and petrology at the University of Reading, and his period there was marked by a further widening of his interests in the geological sciences, and a great extension of his field of activity. In 1930-31, as geologist to the British Arctic Air-Route Expedition, he discovered the Tertiary igneous activity of the East Greenland coast