

NEWS and VIEWS

Economic Botany in Australia:

Dr. B. T. Dickson

DR. B. T. DICKSON has recently retired after more than twenty-three years as chief of the Division of Plant Industry of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, Australia. Dr. Dickson is Canadian by birth, and prior to going to Australia he had been professor of plant pathology and professor of economic botany in McGill University. During the First World War he held a commission in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and after the War was commandant of the First British Army School of Agriculture in France. He went to Australia at the end of 1927 to form the Division of Plant Industry, being appointed its first chief. Under his leadership it has grown into a major research institute with headquarters at Canberra and with branch laboratories and field stations at many points throughout Australia, including Brisbane, Armidale, Deniliquin and Perth. Its personnel now number four hundred, including more than seventy research staff. The work of the Division covers a wide range of plant problems with application to many aspects of the primary industries. Special attention is being paid to pasture research in view of the great importance of pastures in Australian agriculture. Dr. Dickson was president of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science during 1945-47.

Fleet Scientific Officer: Mr. R. J. Gossage

MR. R. J. GOSSAGE, a principal scientific officer in the Royal Naval Scientific Service, has been appointed fleet scientific officer to the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet. The appointment is significant in that it reflects the Admiralty's determination to strengthen the link between scientific work and the Royal Navy, to ensure that science plays its full part in operational planning. Mr. Gossage, who was educated at Nottingham and Cambridge, is by training a physicist. During the early part of his career, while in the service of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, he assisted in a number of geophysical surveys, by both seismic and gravitational methods, in the Middle East; he also carried out Eötvös torsion balance surveys over considerable areas in the Punjab and in North-east India. His work in the Royal Naval Scientific Service has been mainly connected with magnetic and electromagnetic problems in relation to ships, torpedoes and mines. Early in the War he was a member of Dr. E. C. Bullard's team then engaged in the rapid development at high pressure of counter-measures to the German magnetic mine; during this period he contributed to the process of assembling and interpreting the data required in order to establish the relevant magnetic parameters of ships and the validity of various degaussing processes. Afterwards he was concerned with investigations connected with the further development of degaussing processes and techniques, and with methods of field and flux measurements beneath ships, model ships magnetically to scale being used; these model ships were also used in the study of actuation problems of proximity fuses, particularly of torpedoes, mines, etc. He has also assisted in certain fundamental investigations into the propagation of low-frequency electromagnetic waves in the sea, the study being particularly concerned with the effect of the sea/air boundary at the surface.

J. A. d'Arsonval (1851-1940)

JACQUES ARSÈNE D'ARSONVAL, the 'Father of Electrotherapy', was born a century ago, on June 8, 1851, at Château de la Borie. Though he began studying medicine reluctantly, in deference to the wishes of his father, a country practitioner, he soon acquired an enthusiasm for experimental research under the guidance of Claude Bernard. After obtaining his medical degree at the age of twenty-six, he continued to work with Bernard, and afterwards with Brown-Séguard. His great contribution to medicine was the application, following his researches into the effects of galvanic currents on excitable tissues, of high-frequency electricity as a therapeutic agent for the production of endogenous heat within tissues. The term 'D'Arsonvalization' was officially adopted in 1913 by the International Congress of Physiotherapy to designate these applications of high-frequency currents. D'Arsonval was also the first to advocate the treatment of electric shock by artificial respiration. He is noted in physics for being the first, in 1882, to make a moving-coil mirror galvanometer. His inventive genius was also responsible for the remarkable 'calorimètre-à-compensation' and for an early design of incubator. A small, mild-mannered man with an impressive drooping moustache, d'Arsonval was indifferent to priority claims and sought no honours, though he received many. He was president of the Paris Academy of Sciences for the year 1917. The October 1933 issue of the *Journal de Radiologie* was a d'Arsonval jubilee number. His death at Nogent-sur-Marne in occupied France on the last day of 1940 passed almost unnoticed in Great Britain.

Linnean Society of London: Anniversary Meeting

AT the anniversary meeting of the Linnean Society of London held on May 24, H.M. Gustaf VI Adolf, King of Sweden, was elected an honorary member. H.E. the Swedish Ambassador, who was present, said that he had been instructed by H.M. King Gustaf Adolf to express his warm appreciation and thanks for having been called to become an honorary member and to say how much he regretted not being able to be present at the meeting. The Linnean Gold Medal was awarded to Dr. Theodor Mortensen, of Copenhagen, and was received by the Counsellor of the Danish Embassy for transmission to Copenhagen. The following were elected officers of the Society for the session 1951-52: *President*, Prof. F. E. Fritsch; *Treasurer*, Colonel F. C. Stern; *Secretaries*, (Zoology), Dr. A. Tindell Hopwood, (Botany) Dr. George Taylor. The new Members of Council elected were: Mrs. F. L. Balfour-Browne, Mr. Alan Fisk, Mr. H. R. Hewer, Dr. B. M. Hobby, Prof. F. W. Jane and Mr. Patrick M. Syngé. Prof. Bertil Hanström, of the Zoological Institute, Lund, and Prof. Lorenzo Raimundo Parodi, of the University of Buenos Aires, were elected foreign members of the Society.

Paris Academy of Sciences: Elections

THE following have been elected *correspondants* for the Divisions of *Membres libres* and of the Application of Science to Industry of the Paris Academy of Sciences: Prof. M. Dehalu, formerly professor of astronomy, geodesy and the calculus of probabilities, University of Liège, in succession to Prof. G. Dupouy, elected non-resident member; Dr. Irving Langmuir, associate director of the Research Laboratory of the General Electric Co., Schenectady, N.Y., in succession