

studied the philosophical bearings of modern developments in science, in the theory and practice of politics and in changes in manners and morals. When his thinking led to a major change in his personal beliefs, he explained his reasons and his readers had the full benefit of his experience. He thought aloud and on paper, and he dealt with no problem which he did not illuminate. His favourite saying was that if anything could be said, it could be said clearly, and certainly he never said or wrote anything vague or obscure. This may sometimes have led him to oversimplify some problems and to do less than justice to the more subtle points, but his readers have nothing to unlearn; they are beguiled into a deeper study of the problems set out in such a clear and stimulating way in Dr. Joad's various guides to philosophy. These books are models of what an introduction to a difficult subject should be.

In his own philosophical thinking, Dr. Joad was in the unfortunate position of having outgrown the Idealistic teaching of his Oxford days, and of being out of sympathy with the modern school, though he never ceased to admire the brilliance of its leading thinkers. He thought he had found the key to much that is unsatisfactory in modern thinking and conduct in the 'dropping of the object' in our judgments of value, a view that is presented brilliantly and provocatively in his study of decadence. He was happiest in the writings of the ancients, and he had the faculty of presenting their problems as though they were fresh and contemporary. To hear him lecture on the Nicomachean ethics of Aristotle was an unforgettable experience.

Dr. Joad esteemed it a privilege, and the source of his greatest satisfaction, to have been able to guide the thinking of so many young people. Thousands of students, inside and outside university walls, owe to him the discovery that it is exciting to think and a duty to think clearly. He will be missed far more than he would have expected, for he was essentially a humble man.

#### Mr. W. Birtwistle

MR. W. BIRTWISTLE died at Skibbereen, Co. Cork, on March 4, within two days of his sixty-third birthday. Educated at Blackburn Grammar School, he served in the First World War, and in 1920-24 studied oceanography and fisheries under the late Prof. James Johnstone in the University of Liverpool. In 1925 he took up duty as fisheries economist, in charge of the Fisheries Department, Straits Settlements, and Federated Malay States, later assuming the title of director of fisheries. He retired in 1945.

Mr. Birtwistle was a pioneer of fishery development in the Far East, with especial attention to the introduction of power-driven fishing craft, and the cultivation of fish in rice fields. These and many other developments he sponsored were published in the annual reports of the Malayan Fisheries Department. He could foresee future developments in Asia, and made provision for the advanced training of Asian staff in the late 1930's. The wisdom of this has already been shown in the good work done by these men. He was highly respected by the fishermen, and on his death tributes were paid by men of all nationalities in Malaya.

## NEWS and VIEWS

### Sedleian Chair of Natural Philosophy at Oxford : Prof. Sydney Chapman, F.R.S.

THE retirement of Prof. Sydney Chapman from the Sedleian chair of natural philosophy at Oxford has just been announced. Prof. Chapman reaches the age limit after occupying this chair since 1946. Before going to Oxford (see *Nature*, 157, 155; 1946) Prof. Chapman had been at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, for no less than twenty-two years. Fortunately, his departure from Oxford is not going to hinder his interests in geomagnetism and the upper atmosphere, for he is to continue as professor of geophysics at the University of Alaska, an appointment which he has held since 1951 in addition to his work at Oxford. His many friends all over the world will be glad to think that in this way he will be able to increase the very considerable debt that is already owed to him by workers in those fields which are peculiarly his own, and where his influence will remain for many years to come.

### Prof. George Temple, F.R.S.

THE appointment has been announced of Prof. George Temple to succeed Prof. Chapman. Like his predecessor, Prof. Temple has wide interests. Educated at Birkbeck College, London, and Trinity College, Cambridge, he held teaching posts at Birkbeck College (1922-24), at the City and Guilds College (1924-28) and at the Royal College of Science (1928-30) before being appointed to the chair of applied mathematics at King's College, London, a position

which he has held with great success for the past twenty-one years. Prof. Temple was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1943. His earlier researches were in mathematical physics and relativity, to be followed by a vigorous and highly productive application to the quantum theory when this was developed in the late 1920's. A text-book on Rayleigh's principle and another on the general principles of the quantum theory bear evidence of these interests. More recently he has been occupied with problems in aerodynamics, and has become one of the leading theoretical experts in the subject in Britain. He will be most welcome at Oxford, where his wide knowledge of mathematics will help to supplement that of his colleagues, and where his considerable administrative experience and easy charm of manner will prove most valuable.

### Letters to Sir William Siemens

A COLLECTION of more than two hundred and fifty letters written by men of science, statesmen, artists and other notable personalities to Sir William Siemens, the distinguished scientist and engineer of the nineteenth century, has recently been acquired from a relative of Lady Siemens by Sir George Nelson, chairman and managing director of the English Electric Co., Ltd. These letters, arranged chronologically, have been mounted in two special volumes with the printed text on facing pages, together with a short biography of Siemens written by W. H. Kennett, short notes on the authors of the letters and an index. A third volume, made up of the printed copies of the letters, the biography, etc.,