

Lord Rutherford at the Cavendish Laboratory. At this time and in subsequent research he made notable contributions in the accurate determination of the fundamental constants of nuclear physics, obtaining his D.Sc. degree in 1937. He joined the National Standards Laboratory of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization at its inception in 1939, being appointed as officer-in-charge of the Physics Section, which became a Division in 1945. Under Dr. Briggs's guidance the Division has not only established a high reputation for research in the physical sciences but has also been of great assistance to manufacturing industry in Australia during its rapid growth during and after the Second World War. Dr. Briggs was scientific adviser to the Australian delegation to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission during 1946-47; president of the Australian Branch of the Institute of Physics in 1950; and chairman of the Unesco Australian Committee for Natural Science during 1953-55.

Dr. R. G. Giovanelli

Dr. R. G. Giovanelli, who is to be appointed chief of the Division of Physics of the National Standards Laboratory in succession to Dr. Briggs, graduated in 1937 at the University of Sydney, was Research Fellow at the Commonwealth Solar Observatory, and after a short period on the staff of the Sydney Technical College, spent a year at the National Physical Laboratory, Teddington, before joining Dr. Briggs's staff at the National Standards Laboratory. He received his D.Sc. degree at the University of Sydney in 1950 for his studies on the physics of the solar atmosphere. Dr. Giovanelli is a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, and was awarded the Edgeworth David Medal of the Royal Society of New South Wales in 1949. Dr. Giovanelli's main research interests have been in solar physics, the fine structure of the Sun's outer layers, solar activity and spectra, and the emission of radiation from high-temperature atmospheres.

Director of Fire Research : Mr. D. I. Lawson

MR. D. I. LAWSON, who has been appointed director of fire research of the Joint Fire Research Organization of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research and the Fire Offices' Committee, is forty-seven. He was born in Sheffield and educated at Woodhouse Grammar School. After taking first-class honours in physics with mathematics at the University of Manchester and obtaining an M.Sc. degree for research in X-ray crystallography, he became a lecturer in physics and telecommunications at Woolwich Polytechnic in 1934. Five years later he became head of the Research Division at Pye, Ltd., of Cambridge. Mr. Lawson joined the Fire Research Station at Boreham Wood, Herts, in June 1948, since when he has specialized in problems of heat transfer and the ignition of materials. Since 1952 he has been assistant director to Mr. S. H. Clarke, whom he succeeded on August 1. Mr. Clarke has been appointed director of the Warren Spring Laboratory of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (see *Nature*, 182, 225; 1958), which is being built at Stevenage.

National Science Foundation :

Dr. R. M. Robertson

DR. RANDAL M. ROBERTSON, who has been appointed to the staff of the National Science Foundation as assistant director for mathematical,

physical and engineering sciences, was born in Tampa, Florida, and graduated in mathematics and natural philosophy at the University of Glasgow and received a Ph.D. in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He taught briefly at both institutions before serving as a research assistant at Columbia University. During 1937-42 he was a research associate with the Norton Company in Worcester, Massachusetts. During 1942-46 he was on the staff of the Radiation Laboratory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1946 he went to Washington as head of the Mechanics and Materials Branch of the Office of Naval Research. In 1948 he became director of the Physical Sciences Division, and has been director of the Research Group since 1952. He has conducted research on arc-cathode phenomena; nuclear magnetic moments; physics of solid materials, especially abrasives and refractories; and microwave linear-array scanning antennae.

British Scientific Attaché in Moscow

IN reply to further questions in the House of Commons on July 1 regarding the grading of the post of British Scientific Attaché in Moscow as principal scientific officer instead of deputy chief scientific officer as in Washington, Mr. H. Nicholls, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Works, as representing the Lord President of the Council, repeated what was said on June 17 and 24, namely, that if a suitable candidate could not be found, the grading would be reconsidered. There was no question of wanting to have a higher grade officer in the United States than in Moscow. The immense interchange of knowledge with the United States has justified the team of men with the higher grade there, and when there is any likelihood of getting the same co-operation in Moscow the matter will be reconsidered. Appointment of a higher grade scientist was not excluded; but in opening the new service, the manner of approach rather than scientific qualifications was the more important.

Plutonium from Civil Nuclear Power Stations

AN adjournment debate in the House of Commons on July 11 on a motion of Mr. A. Palmer's on the use of nuclear power stations constructed under the civil programme of the Central Electricity Generating Board for the production of military plutonium elicited a sharp reply from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Power. Sir Ian Horobin repeated the specific assurance that all the capital costs of the civil stations will be met and it is the firm intention of the Government, the Atomic Energy Authority and the Central Electricity Authority, in fixing the prices at which the fuel rods will be bought back, to take account of any additional operating costs incurred in neutralizing them. Sir Ian said that a vital part of the economic calculations of the competitive position of nuclear power stations depends upon the number of megawatt-days per ton of uranium obtained from a uranium slug. It should not be taken that any of the slugs in any of the reactors, whether they required modification or not, will remain in the piles for a time different from that under the original programme. Information on high irradiation is required and we cannot wait for developments at Hinkley Point, which is not yet in operation; there is nothing to stop certain elements being left in the Generating Board's reactors to see if they can be burnt to the desired length. For the export trade we are simply concerned with the prices