

NEWS and VIEWS

Psychology at Sheffield : Dr. H. Kay

DR. H. KAY, at present lecturer in experimental psychology at Oxford, has been appointed to the newly established chair of psychology at Sheffield. Dr. Kay read psychology after the English Tripos at Cambridge and for a number of years worked in the Nuffield Unit for research into problems of ageing at the Psychological Laboratory there. During this time, he gained considerable experience of the application of experimental methods to the investigation of manual and other skills. He also took part in field work undertaken by the Unit and was a member of the Naval Medical Expedition to the Arctic in 1949. In 1951, he was appointed to his present Oxford post and played a large part in the development of the Honour School of Psychology, Philosophy and Physiology which was taking place at that time. During the period 1953-56 he led a small team with outstanding success in research sponsored by the Conditional Aid Programme into the fundamentals of industrial skills. He and his colleagues have since extended this work in fruitful directions. Dr. Kay recently spent a year at the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda. During his years at Oxford, Dr. Kay has been active not only in university but also in college teaching, and has latterly been tutor in psychology at Balliol and Merton.

Electrical Engineering in the University of Western Australia : Prof. A. R. Billings

DR. A. R. BILLINGS, who has been appointed professor of electrical engineering in the University of Western Australia, graduated from the University of London in 1949, taking his Ph.D. degree in 1957. During 1951-52 he worked as a scientific officer in the Royal Naval Scientific Service before being appointed lecturer in electrical engineering (electronics and communications) in the University of Bristol. His principal interests are in the band-width compression of speech, and in the less usual applications of semiconductors. His earlier work in the first field has resulted in the production of a vocoder which is both simpler and more efficient than the conventional vocoders; while his later work has been concerned with the development of a formant tracker, and a simple synthesizer to go with it. In the semiconductor field Dr. Billings's main interest has been in application of the Hall effect in the new semiconductor compounds. This has resulted in the production of a suppressed-carrier modulator with very low carrier leak, and of a Hall-effect correlator which, when used in conjunction with the early vocoder, has provided new information about the properties of speech.

The chair of electrical engineering in the University of Western Australia is newly established, and Dr. Billings will be the first holder. The research in which he has been engaged is individual work which can be carried on with small-scale apparatus, and he will take with him to Australia some of his equipment from Bristol.

Rockefeller Foundation Grants to C.S.I.R.O. (Australia)

THE Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization has formed a new Division of Tropical Pastures with headquarters in Brisbane. Dr. J. Griffiths Davies, associate chief of the C.S.I.R.O. Division of Plant Industry and officer-in-charge of the Organization's Plant and Soils Laboratory, Brisbane, has been appointed first chief of the new Division, which will continue to work in association with its parent C.S.I.R.O. Division of Plant Industry. Establishment of the Division of Tropical Pastures reflects the Organization's appreciation of the importance of developing pastures in the summer rainfall areas of Australia, and of the scientific standing of the Brisbane group.

The Rockefeller Foundation has given 30,000 dollars for special equipment for the newly formed Division. The grant will help equip the new Cunningham Laboratory, which is nearing completion. The new laboratory is next to the University of Queensland at St. Lucia, near Brisbane, and will be the headquarters of the C.S.I.R.O. Division of Tropical Pastures. The Division will use its grant to purchase a mass spectrometer and equipment for work with radioactive isotopes. These will be used to expand the Division's work on nitrogen and phosphorus, which are the most important deficiencies in Queensland soils. Dr. J. G. Davies expects that research will make possible a great increase in the carrying capacity of Queensland's pastoral areas.

This is the third large grant that C.S.I.R.O. has received from the Rockefeller Foundation in recent years. Recently the Rockefeller Foundation gave 100,000 dollars for special equipment for the Organization's Divisions of Plant Industry and of Entomology at Canberra. The Foundation also provided 250,000 dollars towards the cost of the giant radio telescope which will soon be constructed at Parkes, New South Wales, for the C.S.I.R.O. Division of Radiophysics.

Radio Telescope for Australia

It has been announced that the contract for the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization's giant radio telescope, which is to be located at Parkes, New South Wales, has been placed with the German firm of Maschinenfabrik Augsburg-Nuernberg A.G. Dr. E. G. Bowen, chief of the Organization's Division of Radiophysics, has played a leading part in completing the design of the radio telescope. It is expected that the total cost of the project will not be far short of £A750,000. Donations towards this have already come from the United States (from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation) and from industry and from private donors in Australia. Work to prepare the site is already in hand, and a start will be made to erect the telescope about the middle of 1960. A feature of the telescope will be its radio 'mirror', a saucer-shaped bowl 210 ft. in diameter and covered in wire mesh. This 'mirror' will pick up radio signals