

Muir was the acknowledged authority on pedology and soil surveying in Britain, and his international reputation led to his advice and assistance being sought in many parts of the world. He became very interested in African soils and personally carried out the soil survey of the Shire Valley project in Nyasaland, publishing papers on this and on soils in Tanganyika. Other activities included an expedition to the Middle East in 1948 to study soils in relation to the corrosion of oil pipe-lines.

His keen interest in geochemistry was probably aroused by translating Polynov's book *The Cycle of Weathering* in 1937. Later, at the Macaulay Institute and at Rothamsted, he became closely associated with V. M. Goldschmidt, who had escaped from the Nazis in Norway and was engaged in writing what is now a standard treatise on geochemistry. Goldschmidt died before it was completed, and it would probably never have been published had not Muir undertaken to complete and edit it. This, in fact, involved compiling the book from Goldschmidt's very incomplete notes.

Muir took a prominent part in re-starting the International Society of Soil Science after the War, and was for a time president of the Commission dealing with Soil Genesis, Classification and Carto-

graphy. He gave invaluable help to the Colonial Office, assisting them to establish their Pool of Soil Surveyors based on Rothamsted, and making personal visits to many territories where there were soil problems. For the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization he undertook many duties and acted as chairman of several of their committees. He renewed his interest in the Middle East as a member of a working party on Land Classification and Soil Surveys and during the past three years attended meetings in Turkey, Iraq and Iran held under the auspices of the Central Treaty Organization. Just before his death he visited India as a member of a Unesco Committee on the establishment of a Central Indian Institute for Pedology and Soil Mechanics.

Muir was a man of great vitality and vigour, equally at home in the field and the laboratory. Always ready to help others, he was held in affection and esteem by his colleagues and staff, and will be greatly missed, both as a scientist and as a man.

He married in 1934 Winifred, daughter of the late Prof. Drummond of the West of Scotland College of Agriculture, and the sympathy of their many friends will be extended to her and her two daughters.

W. G. OGG

NEWS and VIEWS

Henry Dale Research Professorship:

Prof. J. L. Gowans

PROF. J. L. GOWANS, Fellow and medical tutor, St. Catherine's College, Oxford, and a member of the external staff of the Medical Research Council at the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology, Oxford, has been appointed by the Council of the Royal Society as its first holder of the Henry Dale Research professorship of the Royal Society. The professorship was established last year following a gift of £100,000 from the trustees of the late Sir Henry Wellcome to the Royal Society. Prof. Gowans will continue his researches in immunology and experimental pathology. He is well known for his solution of the controversial problem of the fate of lymphocytes and his demonstration that the lymphocyte is an immunologically competent cell.

Geology at Manchester : Prof. E. A. Vincent

DR. E. A. VINCENT has recently been appointed to the chair of geology in the University of Manchester in succession to Prof. W. A. Deer, who has transferred to Cambridge (*Nature*, 189, 793; 1961). Dr. Vincent is one of those rare and valuable scientists who belong to two disciplines: in his case, chemistry and geology. In 1936 he went to the University of Reading, intending to be a geologist, but after three years, having taken the general degree course, the War began and he was directed into the school of chemistry. For most of the War years he was an explosives chemist in charge of plant in the Royal Ordnance Factory, Bishopton. He was determined, however, to return to geology, and the acute shortage of geologists after the War gave him his chance. He joined the D'Arcy Exploration Co. as an oil exploration geologist and was concerned with logging the deep boreholes then being put down in the North of England. In 1946 he was appointed to a newly established lectureship in mineralogy and crystallography in the Durham Colleges (University of Durham), where he started a small chemical

laboratory for silicate analysis and began his studies in chemical mineralogy, for which he is now so well known. In 1951 he moved to Oxford to continue similar work, first as a University demonstrator, and since 1956 as reader in mineralogy.

Dr. Vincent's research has been firmly based on his chemical analyses of rocks and separated minerals. He has developed modern methods as they became available, and in recent years has pioneered the use in geology of neutron activation and radioactive tracer methods of analysis. His earliest work was on Tertiary dykes, particularly the nature of the residual liquids produced by crystal fractionation, and he has collaborated from the chemical side in the investigation of several other aspects of Tertiary igneous rocks. His detailed studies of the iron-titanium minerals of the Skaergaard igneous complex, by analytical, optical and magnetic methods, have made him an authority on this group of minerals. Another of his interests is the distribution of trace elements, as determined by neutron activation; he has particularly worked on gold, silver, thallium and arsenic in differentiated igneous rocks. While Dr. Vincent's research has been in the field of chemical mineralogy and petrology, he has always retained a great interest in geology as a whole, and all will wish him well in his new sphere as a professor of geology.

U.S. Department of Commerce, National Bureau of Standards : Awards

DR. LEO A. WALL, of the U.S. National Bureau of Standards, has been awarded the Department of Commerce Gold Medal for Exceptional Service. A chemist in the Polymer Structure Section of the Bureau, Dr. Wall was honoured "in recognition of pioneering research in the synthesis of new fluorocarbon compounds for the preparation of organic polymers".

DR. H. W. KOCH, chief of the High Energy Radiation Section of the National Bureau of Standards, has been awarded the U.S. Department of Commerce