

## NEWS and VIEWS

## The Geological Society of London: Awards

THE following awards for 1963 have been made by the Geological Society of London: *Wollaston Medal*, to Dr. F. A. Vening Meinesz, emeritus professor, University of Utrecht, for his pioneer researches in geophysics, notably in measurements of gravity at sea, and his studies of isostasy and thermal convection in the Earth; *Murchison Medal*, to Mr. N. L. Falcon of the British Petroleum Co., Ltd., for his application of geology to exploration for petroleum throughout the world; *Lyell Medal*, to Prof. T. N. George, University of Glasgow, for his researches on carboniferous stratigraphy and palaeontology and work in the field of evolutionary palaeontology; *Bigsby Medal*, to Prof. W. S. Pitcher, University of Liverpool, for his work on igneous and metamorphic rocks, particularly in north-west Ireland; *Wollaston Fund*, to Dr. G. M. Brown, University of Oxford, for his contributions to petrology and mineralogy; *Murchison Fund*, to Mr. E. H. Francis, Geological Survey of Great Britain (Scottish Office), for his contributions to stratigraphy and volcanism, especially in the Midland Valley of Scotland; *Lyell Fund*, a moiety to Dr. G. P. L. Walker, Imperial College of Science and Technology, for his researches on the volcanic rocks of Iceland and Northern Ireland; and another moiety to Dr. A. E. M. Nairn, Turner and Newall Fellow, King's College, Newcastle upon Tyne, for his researches in the field of palaeomagnetism and palaeoclimatology.

## The Institute of Physics and the Physical Society: Appointments and Awards

THE following appointments and awards for 1963 have been made by the Institute of Physics and the Physical Society: *Guthrie Lecturer*, Prof. L. F. Bates, Spencer professor of physics at the University of Nottingham. The Lecture will be delivered during the International Conference on Magnetism to be held in Nottingham during September 7-11, 1964; *The Thomas Young Medal and Prize*, jointly to Prof. C. H. Townes, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Prof. A. L. Schawlow, of Stanford University, California, for their work in originating the principle of the optical maser; *The Duddell Medal and Prize*, to Prof. B. N. Brockhouse, of McMaster University, Ontario, Canada, for his work on the lattice dynamics of crystals and the development of the three-axis crystal spectrometer used in this work; *The Charles Chree Medal and Prize*, to Dr. M. N. Hill, of the University of Cambridge, for his work in marine geophysics, particularly in connexion with the application of the seismic method in the deep ocean; *The Charles Vernon Boys Prize*, to Dr. K. D. Froome, of the National Physical Laboratory, for his contributions to experimental physics, particularly his determination of the velocity of light, his invention of a source of continuous short waves and his method for accurate measurement of length.

## Mining and Mineral Technology at the Imperial College of Science and Technology :

Prof. J. C. Mitcheson, C.B.E.

JAMES CECIL MITCHESON, who retires on September 30, has been professor of mining and head of the Department of Mining and Mineral Technology at the Imperial College of Science and Technology since 1952. This critical period has coincided with the contraction of many of the mining schools in the Western World, and it is in a large measure due to Mitcheson's leadership that the Royal School of Mines has strengthened its position, modernized its outlook and taken a full part in the expansion of the Imperial

College. A man of absolute integrity, he combines firmness of purpose with kindness of nature in a manner which has earned the respect and affection of both his colleagues and his students. He came to the Royal School of Mines with an established reputation as an administrator and expert in the economics of coal mining and quickly won the confidence of the metalliferous mining industry. A past-president of the Institution of Mining Engineers, he is now vice-president of the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy. To his academic and professional duties have been added many public responsibilities, including that of chairman of the Safety in Mines Research Advisory Board and, since 1961, chairman of the Geological Survey Board. However, his principal interest has long been mining education in all its forms and, characteristically, his activities in this field have extended far beyond the Imperial College. For these and other public services—all generously and modestly given—he was awarded the C.B.E. in 1961. Mitcheson was Dean of the Royal School of Mines from 1959 until 1962, during which time the rebuilding of the School was planned and initiated. His experience, judgment and rare human qualities have had an important influence on the course of mining education in Britain.

Prof. R. A. L. Black

PROF. R. A. L. BLACK, who is to succeed Prof. J. C. Mitcheson, has spent most of his professional life in South Africa. He was, however, born and brought up in England, being educated at Stowe and the Royal School of Mines (Imperial College of Science and Technology). His university course was interrupted by the outbreak of war when he volunteered for the Air Branch of the Royal Navy, in which he served as a member of air crew and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. At the earliest moment after hostilities ended he returned to the Royal School of Mines and, graduating with honours in 1946, he immediately joined the staff of the Central Mining and Investment Corporation in Johannesburg. This large finance house controls a number of important mines, and Black was given a wide practical experience of underground mining operations before being called to head office. Here he was appointed assistant to the consulting engineer with responsibility for the development of a research programme covering rock mechanics and ground control. Following a short period of actual mine management, he was in 1956 appointed to his present position as Chamber of Mines professor in mining engineering in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Since his appointment, Black has reorganized the undergraduate courses, changing the emphasis away from the teaching of applied technology towards a better grounding in the sciences and basic engineering principles. At the same time he has developed a postgraduate school together with a research unit largely engaged in studying problems arising out of mining at great depth. His own especial fields of interest are in rock mechanics and explosives engineering. In addition to his academic activities Black has been dean of the University Residence, where Mrs. Black and he have most successfully provided a 'home' for some 160 students and 20 members of staff for the past four years.

## The U.S. National Bureau of Standards

DR. ERNEST K. SMITH has been appointed chief of the Upper Atmosphere and Space Physics Division and Robert W. Knecht chief of the Ionosphere Research and Propagation Division at the Boulder Laboratories of the