

Genetics in the University of Sussex: Prof. J. H. Sang

DR. J. H. SANG has recently been appointed to the staff of the University of Sussex, where he will have the status and title of professor in the School of Biology. His early training was in zoology, in which he graduated at the University of Aberdeen in 1935. He was then successively Kilgour Research Scholar in zoology at Aberdeen; Hutchison Research Scholar at St. John's College, Cambridge; Carnegie Senior Research Scholar at Aberdeen; and assistant to the professor of natural history at Aberdeen, Prof. Lancelot Hogben. From 1942 until 1948 Dr. Sang was with the Ministry of Aircraft Production. Since 1948 he has been with the Agricultural Research Council in Edinburgh, first in the Animal Breeding and Genetics Research Organization and later at the Poultry Research Centre, where he is now assistant director. Dr. Sang's scientific interests have centred around interactions of the genotype with the environment, and his main experimental material has been *Drosophila melanogaster*, for which he developed the method of sterile culture on chemically defined media; in recent years his work has taken him into the biochemical genetics of *Drosophila* and the genetics of tumour formation. His advent will bring a wide knowledge of biology and an enquiring mind to Sussex.

Urban Sociology in the University of Manchester:

Prof. J. C. Mitchell

PROF. J. C. MITCHELL, at present professor of African studies in the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, has been appointed to the newly established chair of Urban Sociology in the University of Manchester from October 1. Prof. Mitchell graduated in the social sciences at the University of Natal in 1941. In 1948, after four years War service with the South African Air Force, he graduated with honours in sociology in the University of South Africa. He was awarded a D.Phil. (Oxford) in 1950. During these years after the Second World War, he studied the Yao tribes in Nyasaland as a research officer of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute of Social Studies in British Central Africa. Afterwards, as senior sociologist (1950-52) and then director (1952-55) of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Dr. Mitchell led a team surveying the towns of the Copper Belt of Northern Rhodesia, as well as teams investigating three Northern Rhodesian tribes; he has published extensively on these researches and on the whole problem of urbanization in 'colonial' territories. In 1955 he was appointed professor of African studies at the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, in which he served as Vice-Principal from 1960 until 1962. He has extended his studies of urban problems to the commercial cities of Southern Rhodesia. Dr. Mitchell held a Simon senior research fellowship in this University in 1953, and a visiting professorship at the Johns Hopkins University in 1959. He was Alternate Rhodesian Federal Member of the Inter-African Committee on Social Sciences, and has served on numerous other Government and international committees. In 1960, Prof. Mitchell was awarded the Rivers Memorial Medal of the Royal Anthropological Institute.

The United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation

THE third (1964) report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, unlike the 1958 and 1962 reports, does not attempt to be comprehensive (Supplement No. 14, A/5814. Pp. iv+120. New York: United Nations, 1964. 1.50 dollars). Two subjects are selected for special consideration—the contamination of the environment by nuclear explosions and a first assessment of the risks of inducing malignant disease by radiation in man. The factual information on the recent contamination from the nuclear weapons of

high yield in 1961-62 indicates that radioactive debris ascended to greater heights in the stratosphere: thus the long-lived fission products, strontium-90 (assessed as an additional 5 megacuries) and caesium-137 will have an increased time of residence there measured in years rather than months. 'Dose commitments' from sources of radiation external and internal (including carbon-14) to the bodies of the world's population have been revised accordingly. The deductions on risks of carcinogenesis are based on data obtained in man and experimental animals from moderately large or large doses of radiation. A necessary assumption, which probably results in risks being over-estimated, is that a linear relation between radiation-dose and subsequent development of cancer is applicable. Thus the risk of induction of leukaemia is derived as 1-2 cases per year per rad per million exposed persons, but as several times higher for subjects exposed *in utero*. The risk of developing cancer of the thyroid from irradiation of the neck in children seems to be numerically similar. The over-all risk of all malignancy seems unlikely to exceed by any large factor that deduced for leukaemia.

Medical Research Council of Ireland

THE Medical Research Council of Ireland hold its first meeting twenty-five years ago. The annual grant made by the Minister for Local Government was at first £5,000. Such a sum could only permit the most cautious approach to the encouragement of research. For many years the great majority of the awards went to workers in laboratory departments in the medical schools, where accommodation was already available and where senior members of the permanent staff could direct the work. The Council provided a stipend for the worker as well as technical assistance and a certain amount of special equipment when required. The hospitals could not provide suitable accommodation for research workers and they had no full-time senior staff to act as supervisors. With its meagre resources the Council could not make good these deficiencies. It was, therefore, impossible to embark on any substantial programme of clinical research notwithstanding the wealth of problems in this field. While grants were made from time to time for work on a few clinical problems, the Council has been able to escape from this situation in an effective way only during the past five years. The growth and recent activities of the Council are described in its annual report for the year ending December 1963 (Dublin: Medical Research Council of Ireland, 1964. 5s.). In 1959 the Minister of Health made a substantial increase in the Council's grant. Shortly before this the universities began to develop full-time clinical departments with the accommodation necessary for research. The Council was then able to give systematic support to clinical research by appointing clinical Research Fellows and providing them with technical assistance and essential equipment. Meanwhile, a number of other interests had claimed the attention of the Council. Dr. M. Naughten, Medical Officer of Health, Tipperary South Riding, pointed out the high incidence of endemic goitre in his area. Research workers confirmed this and established its connexion with a low iodine content in the soil. The addition of iodine to table salt, encouraged by the public health authorities on the recommendation of the Council, led to a sharp fall in the incidence of goitre. The search for a chemotherapeutic agent effective against tubercle bacillus began in 1944 under the direction of Dr. V. C. Barry and has been expanded to include the chemotherapy of cancer. The important contribution to cell metabolism made by Prof. E. J. Conway and his colleagues at University College, Dublin, was recognized by a special grant from the Minister and the setting up of the Unit for Cell Metabolism. Over the years the Council has frequently assisted in carrying out investigations on public health questions, for which the Minister made special grants. The National Nutrition Survey,