

MR. WILSON RETIRES

To THE Orient, accustomed to Sukarnos and Chiang-kai Sheks, who cling to power till either life or office retires from them, the voluntary retirement of a Prime Minister while still firm in the saddle is a mystery beyond comprehension. The British Parliamentary democracy, however, has been sustained and nourished by such patriotic, courageous and selfless acts that are difficult to understand, much less to follow, by other countries which have imitated the British form. Mr. Wilson, who has announced his resignation from the office of Prime Minister on 16th March, joins the illustrious band of statesmen who have stepped down from office while the going has been good and no pressures for his ouster were in evidence. Mr. Wilson won a scholarship in the Grammar School and a first class Honours in Politics and Economics at the Oxford University. He entered Parliament in 1945 and has remained a member ever since. He was elected leader of the Labour Party in 1963 on the demise of the scholarly intellectual, Mr. Hugh Gaitskell and has been the leader of the Labour Party for 13 years. He has been Prime Minister for about eight years with a break between 1970-74 when he was the Leader of the Opposition.

Explaining the reasons for his decision, Mr. Wilson said that he had been "for almost 11½ years in the Cabinet. No one should ask for more." He went on to enunciate a very sound principle, valid not only in his case but is an eternal truth that "in times of rapid change, you may be faced with a decision, which perhaps in different conditions, you have faced before. If, on the earlier occasion, you considered and rejected a particular course of action, there is a tendency to say you have been into that, so that you do not give consideration the circumstances require. I am determined not to succumb to this danger". These are weighty words of wisdom worth pondering over. It is a habit of the mind to look back

# On Men & Matters

— R. V.

in the way one handled or solved old problems while a fresh, new and different approach may be called for. The longer one remains in office, the more he tends to look back for guidance and wisdom. The convention against the American President seeking a third term is justified not only on the ground that it might endanger democracy but more so on the ground that the thinking may get fossilised.

It is unfair to Mr. Wilson to suggest that he shirked facing the

growing menace of unemployment, inflation and economic stagnation afflicting the country. He has handled all these problems with courage and competence. If Mr. Wilson felt that another person should try his hand at the solution of the grave problems confronting his country without asserting self-assumed indispensability, it, surely, enhances his greatness. The leader of the British Parliamentary Labour Party must secure a clear majority of votes for his election as such and in the absence of a majority, a second or subsequent ballot will be held after elimination. The sudden and dramatic resignation of Mr. Wilson has not allowed time for the projection of a successor. The party will naturally look out for a leader who will command the allegiance within the party and also carry an image in the country. The Labour Party's chances at the next general elections will largely depend on the choice it makes now.



MUSIC: There are said to be artists who cannot tell their own work from a Guntter Dietz copy. Herr Dietz of Longmoos in Bavaria (West Germany) does not copy works of art with a brush, however, but uses a printing machine. His printings are three-dimensional, which gives a finish like a real painting. As the prints are done on canvas, even experts are sometimes fooled. The system used by Herr Dietz is highly complicated, and no one has yet been able to copy it. When it was first demonstrated to the art world in 1964 it was highly controversial, and it has remained so. Herr Dietz used to design stage settings for Bert Brecht, the playwright of the common man. Now he is producing "paintings" that even working-class people can afford.