

that the objections brought against her have been much too lightly treated; and that the disclosure of her condition, with the circumstances that have followed it, have excited just surprise and dissatisfaction. The subject must be anxiously watched through its future stages.

THE NEW METEOROLOGICAL COUNCIL

THE final stage of the labours of the Treasury Committee, to which we have made frequent reference, has now been reached. The Royal Society has been appealed to to nominate the new council; they have done so, and the Government has accepted the nominations, which are as follows:—Prof. H. J. S. Smith, Savilian Professor of Geometry in the University of Oxford and Keeper of the University Museum (Chairman); Prof. Stokes, Lucasian Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge, and Secretary of the Royal Society; Dr. Warren de la Rue, Mr. F. Galton, and Gen. Strachey, Member of the Indian Council. In addition to these there is Capt. Evans, the Hydrographer of the Navy, as an *ex-officio* member.

The new Meteorological Council, then, like the old Meteorological Committee, is composed of Members of the Royal Society, who severally hold distinguished positions in special departments of science, and who collectively represent considerable administrative ability. The addition to the new Council of two distinguished mathematicians and physicists, such as Professors Smith and Stokes, will be generally regarded with satisfaction, particularly when it is considered that it is to the mathematician and physicist that meteorologists must always look for information and guidance on many matters affecting the intricate and difficult problems with which they, in the position the science has attained, must now deal.

It is, however, matter of general surprise among meteorologists, or we should rather say of wide-spread regret, that the New Council will resemble the old Committee in having no meteorologist upon it. The omission, so far as concerned the Meteorological Committee, was a serious one, and led to mistakes; so far as concerns the new one it will be well if it does not seriously mar its usefulness and retard the foundation of the future science of physical meteorology. At the same time it is only just to point out that because the science is of the future, the choice of the Royal Society was small, and that considerations not on the surface may have had to be borne in mind. However this may be, there is no doubt that the Royal Society and the new Council have accepted a great responsibility, and that the action of the latter will be most keenly watched. The Royal Society, in a report to the Government, has stated:—

“The Council of the Royal Society is of opinion that the most practical method of advancing meteorology is to endeavour by research and experiment to place that science on a firm basis. They are also of opinion that this can be done only by the devotion of the time of scientific men to the necessary research and experiment.”

Men of science, therefore, will be justified in looking both for research and experiment from the new council

in addition to the dreary piles of observations which have cumbered all scientific libraries for the last half-century.

And here is the rub. Will the busy—not to say already over-worked—members of the Council adopt this “practical method,” and conduct researches? or do they propose to content themselves by going into the market with the 1,000*l.* which is given for *research*, and, be it remarked, not for mere *observations*? In the latter case it is to be hoped that their advances will be met in no narrow spirit; for if the new council only fosters research and experiment, it will be a great gain.

While, on the one hand then, we have a right to expect results of a high order from the new Council, on the other we are glad to see they are to be no longer an unpaid body. Besides the 1,000*l.* devoted to research there is another 1,000*l.* devoted to the payment of the members. This sum is to be spent partly in retaining fees and partly in payment for attendance.

The vote asked for the present year and agreed to on Tuesday is 10,000*l.*, and the Secretary of the Treasury then stated that the Committee had recommended an expenditure of 4,000*l.* a year by the Meteorological Council, and, in the judgment of the Treasury, the recommendation was one that ought to be adopted. A supplementary vote will be asked for this at an early date.

As regards the meteorological societies, on whom must devolve the practical working out of the large problem of the comparative climatology of the various districts of the United Kingdom—the working out of this problem being beyond the scope of the operations of the New Council just as certainly as it is beyond the resources originally placed at its disposal—we cannot but suppose that the Government have, in handing over the administration of the meteorological grant to the New Council, made provision that a portion of the additional 4,000*l.* will be spent in adequately aiding these societies in doing important national work which they are in a position to do so economically, and which, judging from the past, they can do so effectively.

This now seems to be the Treasury view, for in the warm debate very properly raised by the Scotch members in favour of the claims of the Scottish Meteorological Society, Mr. W. H. Smith stated that, as to the tests that ought to be applied in such cases, special regard ought to be paid to two points. The object to be attained ought to be distinctly national, and not one in which particular individuals or classes were concerned, and security ought to be taken that the persons who sought assistance were contributing largely to promote the object in view. There is no doubt that the Scottish Society satisfies both these requirements.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer also stated that it would be for the Council to consider how far they could avail themselves of the services of the Scottish Meteorological Society in the conduct of their business, and on what terms that assistance should be rendered.

The Council have lost no time in entering upon their duties, and it is devoutly to be wished that some sign may soon be given that if its constitution is not what was generally looked for, it is still well qualified to discharge its functions and to merit the confidence of meteorologists, although they have had so little to say to its appointment.