

But the three-hundredth anniversary of his birth is happily marked by the publication by Prof. Clifford Dobell of a handsome volume entitled "Antony van Leeuwenhoek and his 'Little Animals' being some Account of the Father of Protozoology and Bacteriology and his Multifarious Discoveries in these Disciplines". Prof. Dobell has been called Leeuwenhoek's "greatest living admirer" and his book is worthy of his hero. How he was led to the study of Leeuwenhoek's letters in the original Dutch, what difficulties he met with and how these were gradually overcome are set forth in an entertaining prefatory epistle, while after this come chapters dealing with the life of Leeuwenhoek, his observations on protozoa and bacteria, his microscopes and methods of work, his language, his writings and other matters. Leeuwenhoek appears to have been singularly free from prejudice and in one of his letters wrote: "As I aim at nothing but Truth, and so far as in me lieth, to point out Mistakes that may have crept into certain Matters; I hope that in so doing those I chance to censure will not take it ill; and if they would expose any Errors in my own Discoveries, I'd esteem it a Service; all the more, because 'twould thereby give me Encouragement towards Attaining of a nicer Accuracy."

#### Australian National Research Council

At the annual meeting of the Australian National Research Council held in Sydney in August, it was determined to make a special effort to secure further financial support for the chair of anthropology which was established in the University of Sydney some time ago through the activity of the Council. The existence of the chair is threatened by recent reductions in government grants. In recognition of the work of its first two presidents, Sir T. W. Edgeworth David and Sir David Orme Masson, the Council has established two lectureships to be awarded alternately at two year intervals, the David lectureship, commencing in 1933, to be devoted to geology or biology, the Masson lectureship, commencing in 1935, to physics or chemistry. A bronze medal in honour of Sir Thomas Ranken Lyle, the retiring president, is to be struck and it will be awarded not more frequently than every second year to such Australian worker in mathematics and physics as may appear to the Council to be worthy of the honour. The incoming officers are: *President*, Sir George A. Julius; *Vice-Presidents*, Sir William Mitchell, Dr. A. C. D. Rivett, Prof. N. T. M. Wilsmore, Prof. H. C. Richards; *Secretary*, Mr. A. J. Gibson; *Treasurer*, Dr. H. G. Chapman; *Executive Committee*, Sir Douglas Mawson, Profs. Agar, Watt, Osborn and Goddard, Drs. Waterhouse and Dickson, and Messrs. Andrews, Gepp and Wainwright.

A LONG discussion as to the future policy of the Australian National Research Council and its relationship to the International Research Council took place at the annual meeting. The standing of the Council as a national academy of sciences for the Commonwealth was reaffirmed and, with the object

of stimulating its working in certain respects, the executive committee was requested to introduce such changes in constitution and by-laws as might be necessary to give effect to the following objects:— (1) the institution of a very limited fellowship; (2) the appointment of distinguished overseas scientific workers who have been associated with science in Australia as honorary overseas fellows; (3) migration of headquarters between capital cities; (4) alteration in rules of appointment to the executive committee to ensure more frequent changes in personnel and to effect closer contact with Royal Societies and other scientific bodies; (5) the display of greater initiative and leadership in the attack upon major problems associated with science in Australia, the Mandated Territories and the Australian quadrant of the antarctic continent; (6) the devising of practical means for bringing members in all centres into more intimate touch with the handling of these problems; and (7) the formation of a committee to explore the possibilities of a federation of Royal Societies and certain other scientific organisations in Australia.

#### Exhibition of Inventions

THE eighth International Exhibition of Inventions organised by the Institute of Patentees (Incorporated) was opened at the Central Hall, Westminster, on October 5 by Sir Maurice Jenks, the Lord Mayor of London. The opening was followed by a luncheon at St. Ermin's Restaurant, when Lord Askwith, president of the Institute, remarked that it is not the old men, but the young, who are bringing marvellous things into the world. As in former years, the exhibition is divided into two main sections, a trade section which includes many things already on the market, and a section of new inventions, the latter being sub-divided into groups of exhibits relating to domestic and labour-saving appliances, electrical and radio apparatus, building and housing details and mechanical apparatus. As might be expected, the last of these groups contains many new devices for motor vehicles such as brakes, lights, signalling signs and means for preventing cars being stolen. One interesting exhibit is a small electrically driven model boat in a tank for demonstrating the increase in efficiency of the propeller obtained by surrounding it with a ring of approximately cone section. Other exhibits relate to internal combustion engines and to variable speed gear and transmission gear.

#### A Reversing Centrifugal Gear

AMONG the last group of exhibits in the Inventions Exhibition is the new epicyclic gearing invented by Prof. F. Soddy, the main object of which is to provide for the transmission of large powers at high speed, and for reversing without declutching. The gear in one form or another is therefore suitable for use with steam turbines or high-speed marine engines. Unlike most epicyclic gears, there are in it no toothed wheels. The driving and driven shafts are co-axial. On the end of the driving shaft are