

Australian Water Supply

THE water supplies of certain parts of Australia, and the occurrence of periodic drought, are the subject of comment by Dr. J. P. Thomson in an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of January 12. As a result of observations ranging over half a century, Dr. Thomson believes that there are unmistakable signs of desiccation and he advocates the immediate necessity of measures to preserve the water supplies and to resist the ill-effect of droughts. He points to observations on Lake George and various lagoons in the eastern part of New South Wales as well as Lake Eyre as showing rapid deterioration in humidity. The wells of the great artesian basin, according to him, are showing signs of decreased flow which he attributes to the plutonic and therefore limited supply of the water. He points also to the decreased flow in many water courses and the serious loss of water by excessive evaporation in the dry atmosphere. Dr. Thomson would like to see every effort to conserve water by preventing waste of flood water and checking the number of wells, and he favours also the preservation of fodder against times of stress. He points also to the urgent need of better weather forecasts, which he thinks must come from the antarctic, in order to give the farmer warning of any surplus or deficiency in rainfall. Measures such as these might go hand in hand with more land settlement and production for wider markets.

Russian Arctic Expeditions

IN recent years the Soviet Union has paid a great deal of attention to the exploration of its arctic territories and the investigation of commercial sea routes north of Siberia. The Society for Cultural Relations between the Peoples of the British Commonwealth and the U.S.S.R. has recently directed attention to the activities of Soviet arctic expeditions in 1932. Most important were the establishment of observatories at Cape Chelyuskin, at Rudolph Island in Franz Josef Land, in Novaya Zemlya and at the mouth of the Lena River. The Rudolph Island station is to be the base of a thorough exploration of Franz Josef Land and the little-known seas to the east. Several ice-breakers were engaged in hydrographical work in the Barents and Kara Seas while the *Sibiriak*, which made the north-east passage from Archangel to Bering Strait, reports that ice congestion in the western part of the passage can be avoided by passing north of Northern Land. It is by no means certain, however, that this route could be relied on every year in maintaining communication between White Sea ports and the Lena River, though the possibility is worth investigating.

Annales Guebhard-Séverine

WE have received No. 8 of these annals, which have been issued yearly since 1925 by the Institut Guebhard-Séverine, 4 Rue du Seyon, Neuchâtel, Switzerland, and are distributed free on application to the Institut, to investigators in all countries. The Institut is also willing to publish scientific works written in any of the languages French, English,

German or Italian; its practice appears to be to translate into French for publication. Papers on subjects studied by the late Adrien Guébbard are particularly invited; these subjects include geophysics and geology, botany, electricity, hydrodynamics, osmosis, biological physics, meteorology, acoustics, photography and spectroscopy. The present number of the annals contains four papers, by R. Reinicke on the tetrahedral field of action of atoms, by F. Strunz on the natural sciences in the work of Albertus Magnus, by L. Courvoisier on researches to determine the 'absolute' motion of the earth, and by D. Chahnazaroff on petroliferous waters.

Institute of Physics

THE recently issued annual report for 1932 of the Board of the Institute of Physics shows a satisfactory record of work during the year. There has been a steady increase in membership of the Institute which now has about seven hundred names on its roll. The local sections, too, in Australia and India, report a successful year. During the year, a local section was formed at Manchester under the chairmanship of Prof. W. L. Bragg with Dr. H. Lowery of the Physics Department of the University as local secretary. The following officers among others have been elected for the session 1933-34: *President*, Sir Henry Lyons; *Treasurer*, Major C. E. S. Phillips; *Secretary*, Prof. J. A. Crowther.

Third International Congress of Experimental Cytology

THE third International Congress of Experimental Cytology will be held at Cambridge on August 21-26. The international president is Prof. Th. Huzella, professor of anatomy in the University of Debrecen, whose presidential address will be entitled "Culture des tissus en ses relations aux problèmes générales de la biologie et aux problèmes spéciales de la médecine". The chief feature of the Congress will be discussions on the following topics: "Cell Respiration and Cell Metabolism"; "Cell Form and Function as demonstrated by Recent Advances in Tissue Culture"; "The Electro-Physiology of the Cell"; "Entwicklungsmechanik und Explantation"; "The Cultivation of Animal and Plant Viruses". Papers will be presented by authors from Great Britain, Germany, Austria, Hungary, U.S.S.R., United States, Poland, Italy, Holland, Czechoslovakia, France, Switzerland, Denmark, and Japan. Among the distinguished foreign visitors will be Prof. H. Wieland (Munich), Prof. A. Szent-Györgyi (Budapest), Prof. R. Chambers (New York), Prof. W. J. V. Osterhout (New York), Prof. J. Michaelis (New York), Prof. S. C. Brooks (Berkeley), and Dr. K. Landsteiner (New York). Further information concerning the Congress can be obtained from Dr. Honor B. Fell, Strangeways Research Laboratory, via Cherryhinton, Cambridge.

Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the French Society of Physical Chemistry

A PROGRAMME has now been arranged for the meetings which are to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the French Society of Physical