

includes the announcement that Prof. Fermi has produced a new element, of atomic number 93. The new element was found when uranium, atomic number 92, was bombarded with neutrons; it is radioactive, with a half-period of about 13 minutes. This announcement would appear to be a sequel to the experiments reported by Prof. Fermi in *NATURE* of May 19, p. 757, when he described the effects of bombarding various elements with a powerful stream of neutrons. Uranium was not among the elements mentioned by Prof. Fermi in his communication, but it would seem that he has now succeeded in obtaining an effect from it.

#### Science and Psychical Research

EARLY this year (January 6, p. 18) we referred to the proposed formation of a body to be called "The International Institute for Psychical Research", and expressed the hope that the men of science who had allowed their names to appear on the circular announcing the new organisation would see that whatever investigations were undertaken were in accord with what science demands of such inquiries. Apparently it has been difficult to secure these essential conditions, for Prof. D. F. Fraser-Harris, who was announced as the research officer of the Institute, informs us that he has resigned that position. When he invited a number of scientific friends to serve on the Committee of the Institute, he was under the impression that a laboratory was to be provided, but he now finds this is not so, and that there is a lack of appreciation of what scientific investigation signifies. It may be recalled that Prof. Elliot Smith, who was advertised a short time ago as president of the Institute, resigned a few weeks ago on account of ill-health. We understand that most of the chief men of science whose names were advertised in the list of members of the Consultative Committee of the Institute have also resigned. In connexion with the subject of psychical research, Prof. Fraser-Harris, referring to the article "From a Correspondent" in *NATURE* of May 19, p. 747, writes:—"There is one circumstance not mentioned by the author of the account of the experiments of MM. Osty (1932) on 'the unknown powers' produced by Rudi Schneider. It is the fact that, between the medium and the sitters on one hand and the recording apparatus on the other, there was interposed a sheet of muslin stretched on a wooden frame. Clearly, the medium on one side of this partition, even with all his limbs free and surrounded by any number of accomplices, could not have played any tricks with the apparatus on the far side of the partition. (A photograph of this screen is on p. 54 of *Revue Métapsychique*. 1932. No. I.)"

#### Tornado at Concepcion

A BRIEF summary of damage and loss of life caused by a tornado on May 27 in the Chilean town of Concepcion, the chief port of entry to southern Chile, appeared in some evening papers on May 28, and in the *Times* of May 29. The storm was described as a "cyclone", but the note in the *Times* stated that the damage occurred in a strip 65 ft. wide, and if that

statement is correct, there can be no doubt that this was a tornado of the American pattern, and a vigorous example at that, seeing that trees were uprooted and buildings were wrecked as the storm swept across the town, moving apparently from east to west. One account stated that a house was lifted off the ground and carried along for a distance of nearly 55 yards. The incident is of especial scientific interest; if the 'dust devils' of desert regions and the maritime or lacustrine 'waterspouts' are included under the term 'tornado', there appears to be hardly any part of the world where this small intense rotary storm may not occasionally occur; they are not uncommon in the Mediterranean, and Concepcion lies in the corresponding southern latitude and has the same type of climate with maximum rainfall in the winter half of the year. It is then that the westerly winds invade a region that fringes the trade wind belt during the summer. The date of this particular storm corresponds with late November in the Mediterranean, and in both regions the late autumn is in general about the middle of the wettest quarter of the year, when the tornado might be expected to occur most often in coastal regions, even though the American tornado is more a phenomenon of the late spring and summer.

#### Trevithick Centenary Commemoration

At a meeting of the general committee of the Trevithick Centenary Commemoration, held on May 31 at the Institution of Civil Engineers and presided over by Sir Murdoch Macdonald, the report of the Executive Committee appointed in October 1932 to make arrangements for the commemoration was presented by Mr. H. W. Dickinson, honorary secretary, and passed. The report showed that about £500 had been subscribed, and that the committee had been able to carry through the plans laid down. Memorial services were held in Westminster Abbey and Dartford Parish Church, a memorial lecture was delivered by Prof. C. E. Inglis, and memorial tablets have been erected at Merthyr Tydfil to mark the site of Trevithick's experiment of 1804, and at University College, London, to mark the experiment with the locomotive *Catch-me-who-can* in 1808. A sum of money had also been allocated to assist in the erection of a tablet at Trevithick's birthplace. The work of the committee had been greatly assisted by the hospitality of the Institution of Civil Engineers and by the generosity of Messrs. Babcock and Wilcox, Ltd., who had defrayed the cost of the publication of the memorial volume on Trevithick by Messrs. Dickinson and Titley. An interesting outcome of the celebration was that it had led the Institution of Civil Engineers to appoint a committee to make an annual visitation to Westminster Abbey to inspect the various memorials to engineers there.

#### Expedition to the Canadian Arctic

AN expedition, organised by the Oxford University Exploration Club with the full support of the Royal Geographical Society and the Canadian Government, is sailing shortly for Ellesmere Land in the Canadian