

native occupation; and further land is to be purchased out of moneys to be provided by Parliament. Purchase will be spread over a period of five years, the total amount of the expenditure being £10,000,000. This will admit, it is expected, of an addition of 14,000,000 acres to the reserves. Among the provisions of the Bill it is proposed to include the gradual abolition of native squatting on European-owned lands and the registration of native labour tenants. Of these the former will in all probability arouse some opposition on the part of various interests; but the practice has given rise to friction and abuse on occasion, and on the whole its abolition is probably well advised.

Control of Australian Aborigines

AN innovation of no little importance in the method of controlling the Australian aborigines, who come under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth Government, is announced from Canberra. The Cabinet has decided, it is reported by *The Times* correspondent in the issue of April 29, that in future the work of the police patrol in the south-west of the Northern Territory will be entrusted to an anthropologist who is familiar with the language and customs of the tribes. The district under the new officer will thus include the country of the Arunta, made famous in the annals of anthropology by the investigations of Sir Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen. This change in administrative machinery is, no doubt, in large measure due to the protests made, especially by anthropologists, when recently certain aborigines were tried for murder on account of killings in accordance with tribal custom. It is, at any rate, regarded as marking an advance in the method of dealing with native offences against the law of the white man, as the officer will have magisterial powers to deal with the great majority of cases, and will take only the more important to the court at Alice Springs. Mr. Paterson, the Minister for the Interior, has announced that Dr. Strehlow of the University of Adelaide, now conducting investigations on behalf of that University in North Australia, has been appointed to the post.

Scientific Research in Australia and New Zealand

AT the instance of the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, steps are being taken to effect close collaboration between their respective Councils for Scientific and Industrial Research. The two Dominions have in common many problems in primary industry, and united action to solve them is obviously desirable. It is proposed to attach New Zealand officers to the Australian teams working on (a) mammitis in dairy cattle, (b) bovine contagious abortion, (c) sterility in sheep and (d) preservation and transport of foodstuffs. Australia will probably second an officer to the staff of the Dairy Research Institute of New Zealand, and will send the leaders of its Soils and Forest Products Divisions to consult with their corresponding numbers there about future co-operative organisation. This move for closer association between the research councils of the Dominions is overdue and its development will be watched with much interest.

The Parliamentary Science Committee

DURING the past twelve months several institutions have affiliated with the Parliamentary Science Committee; and the approximate aggregate membership of all the bodies affiliated is now 100,000. Two of the latest bodies to enrol themselves are the Institution of Gas Engineers and the British Association of Zoologists. The last-named accession affords peculiar satisfaction to the Committee, inasmuch as it is the first enrolment of a body devoted to pure—as distinct from applied—science; and it is hoped that it is the harbinger of others to come. Many societies devoted to natural history were perturbed last year at the prospect of a bombing centre being established near Chesil Beach. Letters of protest were published in the daily Press, but more effective action might have been taken by bringing the matter before Parliament through such a medium as the Parliamentary Science Committee, which actually meets at the House of Commons. By so doing, naturalists would have had the advantage of common action on their behalf by a Committee entitled to speak for an aggregate of 100,000 people interested in scientific matters—a body not to be lightly disregarded by a House of Commons the individual members of which owe their presence in that assembly to the votes cast in their favour.

Physics of the Divining Rod

THE April number of *Discovery* contains an article on the divining rod by E. Christie which gives a detailed account of methods adopted by the author in searching for water and certain metals. It claims to show that there is nothing mysterious about the power of divining, and that it is subject to definite natural laws. The great difficulty which impedes the progress of scientific investigation is that the statements of dowzers regarding their methods in the field and manner of inference vary considerably, and the article mentioned only adds yet another to the many already published. That there is a basic similarity cannot be denied by anyone who has taken the trouble to study them, but the elucidation of the fundamental facts from what are necessarily very subjective accounts has so far not been achieved. The author, however, is right in stressing the point that without examining the details, in such accounts as he has written, no man of science is likely to arrange a reliable test for dowzers. Experiments in which the underlying physical process is unknown are always difficult to interpret, and it is very doubtful whether a conclusive proof of the claims of dowzers will be obtained unless much more attention is given to their writings, vitiated as they nearly always are, by the incorrect use of the terminology of physics.

Royal Institution: Annual Meeting

THE annual meeting of the members of the Royal Institution was held on Friday, May 1. In the unavoidable absence of the president, Lord Eustace Percy, the chair was taken by the treasurer, Sir Robert Robertson. The Committee of Visitors, in a preface to its annual report, which was presented at