

of Java, approximately in a geological sense his contemporary. Discussion, which hitherto has proceeded on the line that *Sinanthropus*, while standing in relation to *Pithecanthropus*, was definitely on the line of advance, is thus not a little confounded. On the other hand, Prof. Dubois, in his study of *Pithecanthropus* and early man in Java (see p. 294), offers a way out by removing *Pithecanthropus* from the human line and associating him with the gibbon, while in the recently discovered Solo man of Java—the *Javanthropus* to which Weidenreich and others see resemblances

in Peking man—he sees, not a line leading to the Neanderthal stock destined to die out, but a member of a group, including Rhodesian and Wadjak man, which is on its way to becoming modern man in the person of the Australian aborigine.

Anthropologists, while congratulating Prof. Weidenreich on this great discovery made under the auspices of his laboratory, are deeply indebted to him for the dispatch with which he has placed at their disposal the new material for further discussion of this intricate and fascinating problem.

The Agricultural Research Council

THE Agricultural Research Council took over, on its formation in 1931, the functions of the Development Commissioners' Advisory Committee on Agricultural Research, and was charged with the duty of organizing and developing research so that the resources available for that purpose should be used to the utmost advantage. The wisdom with which that committee had developed and guided research had won for it the admiration of farmers and scientific investigators alike, particularly of those who could recall the backward position of Great Britain in agricultural research in the early years of this century. Research had so developed, however, that a more comprehensive body was needed for its guidance, one with powers such as that of forming committees and sub-committees which could bring the experience of specialists to bear on the various problems.

While the Agricultural Research Council is analogous to the Medical Research Council, and to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, its administration is more complicated because it has not built up, nor does it control, its own research centres. The general relationship of the Agricultural Departments with the research institutes, university departments of agriculture and agricultural colleges remains unchanged, the Council giving criticism and advice on research programmes and grants; in 1934-35 the sum of £329,695 was included for research and advisory work in the estimates of the Agricultural Departments with appropriations in aid from the Development Fund. The Council has powers to initiate special services—a function eminently appropriate for a body having such a 'bird's-eye-view' of research and of the industry as a whole.

The second report of the Council* describes the continuation of a survey of agricultural research in Britain, but is devoted more particularly to those activities or institutions which have been the object of special inquiry during the period under review. Animal diseases continue to receive special attention, in accordance with a policy adopted by the Council early in its career—that of furthering work on certain diseases which might spread should the Government decide to encourage the live stock industry. The Council found that an increase in the number of trained investigators was one of the most urgent needs in this field of research, and took appropriate action.

Amongst the work of the specialist committees of the Animals Diseases Committee, that on braxy and braxy-like diseases may be noted; after reviewing the situation, it was decided that, as a foundation for further successful research in this field, more accurate information should be obtained on such questions as the incidence of infections of sheep by anaerobic bacilli, and a special investigator was appointed to undertake a survey. As an example of research of special value to large tracts of the Empire, as well as to Britain, reference may be made to the work on sheep blowflies at Bangor and at Aberdeen. Promising results have been obtained by studying separately the several factors involved in blow-fly attacks; thus, at Bangor, high humidity at the base of the wool was found to be one of the essentials for the eggs and larvæ of the fly, and work is in progress to investigate the conditions causing high humidity.

* Committee of the Privy Council for the Organisation and Development of Agricultural Research. Report of the Agricultural Research Council for the period October 1933—September 1935. (Cmd. 5293.) Pp. iv+130. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1936.) 2s. net.

The Agricultural Research Council performs an important function in serving as a link with other organizations interested in agricultural research. Thus, it was recognized early on that there was a common field in the study of human and animal nutrition in its bearing on health, and joint committees were formed with the Medical Research Council to investigate iodine deficiency and to co-ordinate work on tuberculosis in animals. Again, the Milk Marketing Board made a grant of £4,000 towards research on contagious abortion in cattle, and this was made to the Council.

As an example of the energetic action taken in

consequence of the recommendations of its committees, the instance may be quoted of the report of the special committee on *Brucella abortus* infection, recommending that the Council should investigate this problem at a centre of its own, possessing an adequate area of land. The additional powers necessary to carry this into effect were promptly sought and secured.

The promptitude and vigour evident throughout this report emphasize the fact that the creation of the Agricultural Research Council was an event of the first importance for the science and practice of agriculture in Great Britain.

Peary: The Man and the Explorer

Peary

By William Herbert Hobbs. Pp. xv+502+8 plates. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936.) 5 dollars.

THE appearance of yet another book on Peary would scarcely attract much attention were it not written by an author of international reputation, one who knew both Peary and Greenland. Prof. Hobbs gives a hint in his preface as to the reason for writing the book, namely, that Peary, for various reasons, has never had "the full acclaim that was his due". One of those reasons is the publication, in England and in America, of several books which, in no uncertain terms, pronounce that the claim of Peary to have reached the Pole was at least open to doubt, if not actually fraudulent. These books have had a vogue which must have deeply offended ardent supporters such as Prof. Hobbs. The real student of polar literature can have little regard for such books, and can only regret the existence of those writers to whom the phrase about by-gones has no meaning at all, and who delight in resurrecting distasteful controversies of the past.

The present book, therefore, is at once a biography of a man and a refutation of the slurs that have been cast upon the claims of that man; yet the friendly critic must deplore that the author took upon himself that dual task when the first alone would have been more effective. The word "claim", introduced into the literature of polar exploration by the American Press and, be it admitted, by Peary himself, should never appear in such a book as this. Prof. Hobbs would probably answer that it was through the false claims of Dr. Cook to have reached the Pole a year earlier

than Peary that the latter was put on the defensive; in other words, that it was not Peary who began the claiming.

It will be remembered that, owing to Peary's curious methods of navigation and the lack of witnesses on his final dash to the Pole in 1909, there was no decisive proof of his having been there, and his amazing rate of travel as soon as he left his last white companion gave his detractors the chance of beginning an undignified controversy. In the absence of documentary evidence, Peary's friends fell back on the argument that his character was such that he must have been where he said he had gone, upon which the scandal-mongers began to ferret out his past in an endeavour to bring to light circumstances which might give a contrary colour to his character. In the opinion of the writer they failed to do so, and the verdict should be that Peary reached the vicinity of the Pole as he said he did, but it seems an odd way of arriving at a valuation of such a deed.

The announcement of a new life of Peary, therefore, gave hopes that it would so portray the man that the world at large would see without a doubt that his character did not permit of the kind of subterfuge of which he was accused. The picture begins with great promise: we are introduced to a very pleasant boy in a small town in Maine in the mid-seventies of last century. We read his delightful letters to his mother, about his work and his play, his associates and his plans for the future. At his college he was a very hard worker, as indeed he was throughout his life, and he won the praise and the friendship of his professor, who on one occasion described his standard with the queer phrase of "at least 100 per cent".