

ties will be interested in the system; they will have the opportunity to test the product at a forthcoming meeting in Copenhagen. Particular interest is expected from those networks that have to buy Post Office time. A further benefit of introducing PCM in Britain is that the television manufacturers will no longer be able to use the poor quality of a sound track as an excuse for not improving the amplification system in television sets.

There are some problems. Will video-tape recorders be able easily to accommodate sound in vision? Do the patent laws cover such a system? BBC spokesmen are quick to stress that these questions have not yet been probed in any detail, but added that the sound in vision system would be commercially produced, and associated questions would be dealt with in this context.

It seems that the BBC has gained a notable success in applying sound in vision to broadcasting, and although the board of governors has not yet taken a formal decision on its general use, snags are unlikely.

PREHISTORY

Leakey in Addis

IN a ceremony on November 2 in Addis Ababa, Dr L. S. B. Leakey, of the Centre for Prehistory and Palaeontology in Nairobi, was awarded the Haile Selassie I Gold Medal and Prize for African Research. Another recipient of this year's prize was a Russian anthropologist, Professor Dmitri Alexeivich, who is noted for his work on African languages. Both receive an award of 40,000 Ethiopian dollars (about £6,500).

Dr Leakey is, of course, well known for his part in the discoveries of fossils of early members of the human family in Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania and elsewhere in East Africa. Recently, Dr Leakey has been associated with an international research project for prehistory and anthropology in the Omo Valley in South-West Ethiopia. When in London last week on his way to Cornell University, Dr Leakey said that the second season of the project has been successfully completed this summer, and that some very important palaeo-anthropological discoveries had been made. Preliminary results are in preparation and are expected shortly.

As in 1967, the international team of American, Ethiopian, French and Kenyan parties received assistance from the governments of Ethiopia and Kenya, and both the Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie I, and President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya have been personally interested in the expedition. Permission was given for teams to use Nairobi as their base of operations, and to cross and recross the frontier of the north-west corner of Lake Rudolf without having to worry about customs, immigration or other formalities. This has made movements very much easier.

Although it will take some time for all the discoveries in the Omo Valley to be identified, measured and so on, it does look as if Omo may take some of the limelight from Olduvai in the story of the prehistory of man. As Dr Leakey said in his speech of thanks to the Emperor at the prizegiving ceremony: "There is no doubt at all that Ethiopia shares with Kenya and Tanzania a major role in human evolution and must be regarded as having a very special contribution to make to the study of man's remote past".

Parliament in Britain

by our Parliamentary Correspondent

Fuel Policy

MR ROY MASON, the Minister of Power, resisted pressure to publish the results of the fuel policy meeting recently arranged by his ministry at Sunningdale. "The papers and proceedings of the conference are confidential", he said. Mr Eric Lubbock reminded the minister that his predecessor had been forced to reveal the results of last year's conference by the Select Committee on Science and Technology. All Mr Mason would say, however, was that the discussions had not resulted in any revision of the forecasts of the fuel policy White Paper, though his ministry had promised to have another look at the trends in coal. (Oral answers, November 5.)

Generating Capacity

MR ROY MASON told Mr Arthur Palmer that the Central Electricity Generating Board expects to have an excess capacity this winter of about 20 per cent over maximum demand. As new plants came into commission, old plants were being taken out of service. (Oral answer, November 5.)

Select Committee

THERE is one change in the personnel of the Select Committee on Science and Technology. Mr Tam Dalyell, MP for West Lothian, and one of the most outspoken members, is no longer a member, and Mr Ray Dobson, MP for Bristol North East, is in. The committee was re-appointed without argument on November 5. It is expected to spend the next few months writing its report on defence research.

University Teachers

By the end of the year, university teachers should know whether their pay claim has been approved by the Prices and Incomes Board. Mrs Shirley Williams, announcing this, said that when the report was published she would make a statement. (Written answer, November 6.)

Agriculture

THERE was angry argument when the Select Committee on Agriculture was re-appointed for the new session. The motion re-appointing the committee states that it is to produce a report by December 31, 1968, after which it will presumably cease to exist. Mr John Farr, a member of the committee, was angry that it was being given no longer than six weeks in which to write its report. Why was it being cut off in the middle of a very painstaking study and survey into the activities of the Ministry of Agriculture? Mr Brian O'Malley (Lord Commissioner of the Treasury) said that the House had as many specialist committees as it could handle. There was a variety of subjects which it would be worthwhile to discuss in specialist committees, but this would not be possible until changes could be made. He said that he was sure that the committee could finish its work by the end of the year. Dr John Dunwoody, another committee member, doubted that this would give sufficient time. He added that it had been a mistake to increase the number on the committee from fourteen to twenty-five; this was too many, and made the committee unwieldy. (November 7.)