

dividual research workers. And here it would be well to consider the difference between discovery and invention. The former is usually the result of protracted inquiry by highly skilled and highly educated workers, while invention may, and does often, result from the recognition of a need or opportunity for improvement in a machine or process by a mere workman, ignorant of science in a general sense, but whom long experience in some one industry has led to realise the technical difficulties peculiar to the work in which he has been engaged. The question before the conference was how to estimate the value of the services rendered by a successful employee and the right way to reward them. This is a very difficult problem. Any system of bonuses would be for various reasons undesirable and perhaps unfair. There was agreement that the scale of remuneration must be liberal, in order, for one thing, that the man so employed may be free from anxieties as to his own future. But it is becoming clear to everyone that if industry is to enjoy the advantage of engaging the best brains of the nation this kind of calling must be made attractive to the rising young men and women. At present, as pointed out by the chairman, the new research associations are finding that there are not sufficient scientific workers to go round.

#### THE BOURNEMOUTH MEETING OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION.

THE success of the meeting of the British Association, which opens in Bournemouth on September 9, should be a foregone conclusion if one may judge by its appeal to the imagination. It may be said that a scientific history of the war will be presented. Commencing with the inaugural address of the president (the Hon. Sir Charles A. Parsons, K.C.B.), which will deal with "Engineering and the War," throughout the week the invaluable war-work of men of science, which played so magnificent a part in our victory, will be the subject of a great variety of lectures and debates. Secrets which have hitherto been jealously preserved will be made public, and it should be possible after the meeting to estimate as never before the enormous importance of science in modern military operations.

Apart from questions of war, a large proportion of the papers and discussions will be closely in touch with the problems and activities of the Empire to-day. Education, citizenship, and economic and industrial difficulties will all be prominent features of the programme.

There is every reason, therefore, to believe that the meeting will be of unique interest and importance. Whether it will be an equal success in point of numbers in attendance is less certain. The amount of interest shown locally in the proceedings cannot at the time of writing be said to have come up to expectations. This comparative lack of enthusiasm is not, however, surprising in a town of so many and diverse distractions. The

number of applications for associateship and membership is at present much smaller than anticipated, but in the opinion of those competent to judge the eleventh hour will bring a marked improvement in this direction.

One of the greatest problems which the local executive committee has had to face has been that of finding accommodation for visitors. A popular seaside resort in September inevitably presents extraordinary difficulties in this respect. Great efforts have been made to deal with the situation, and considerable public spirit has been displayed by hotel-keepers and others in helping the committee in its task.

The local preparations for the meeting are well in hand. The work of adapting the Municipal College to the needs of the Association is practically complete, and better accommodation has probably never been provided.

#### THE PROTECTION OF WILD BIRDS.

THE Report of the Departmental Committee on the Protection of Wild Birds, which has just been issued, after a considerable delay due to war conditions, marks an important step towards the proper and efficient control of British bird-life, which has been subject to the varying and complicated regulations of a long series of legislative enactments. The report foreshadows unified and simplified lines of regulation which, if adopted in law, ought to make the protection of wild birds not only more practicable, but also more effective. Of the fresh suggestions made by the expert Departmental Committee, to which the thanks of all naturalists are due, the most far-reaching is that regarding the formation of a permanent Ornithological Advisory Committee, which would sit in London and not only advise the Central Authority on all ornithological questions, but also collect information and control investigations bearing upon the activities and status of wild birds. It is astounding to learn, though it is undoubtedly on a par with the official attitude towards science, that the Wild Birds Protection Acts have been administered without any expert ornithological assistance, except in the case of Scotland. Even there the matter of advice seems to have been, so to speak, behind the scenes, for there is no evidence of public acknowledgment of this highly technical information and advice.

Of many suggested improvements upon the old laws, mention can only be made of a few. All birds are recommended for protection during the breeding season, from May 1 to September 1, subject to the right of the owner or occupier, but even this exception is abolished in the case of scheduled birds, which, in Schedule A, including more than fifty species, are absolutely protected during the breeding season, and in Schedule B, including about twenty-seven species, are absolutely protected throughout the year. The unifying of the schedules for the protection of both birds and eggs is a vast improvement upon the present