

**JOINT POLAR RESEARCH COMMITTEE OF THE ROYAL  
GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY AND SCOTT POLAR  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

In November 1946 the Royal Geographical Society, in conjunction with the Polar Institute, established a Joint Polar Research Committee to facilitate scientific co-operation in exploration and research with similar committees or institutes abroad. The present composition of this Committee is as follows: Lord Wakehurst (Chairman); Mr Augustine Courtauld; the Reverend W. L. S. Fleming, Director, Scott Polar Research Institute; Mr A. R. Glen; Mr L. P. Kirwan, Director and Secretary, Royal Geographical Society; Dr N. A. Mackintosh, Director of Research, *Discovery* Investigations, Colonial Office; Dr B. B. Roberts, Scott Polar Research Institute; Air-Commodore G. I. L. Saye, Director of Navigation, Air Ministry; Mr J. M. Wordie, Hon. Sec., Royal Geographical Society and Chairman, Scott Polar Research Institute; the Scientific Liaison Officer to the High Commissioner for Australia; the Scientific Liaison Officer to the High Commissioner for New Zealand; the Scientific Liaison Officer to the High Commissioner for South Africa.

The work of this committee has so far been directed exclusively to Antarctic affairs, with a view to effecting closer co-ordination between the various expeditions now in the field or being planned. In particular the Committee has been actively discussing the proposed British-Norwegian-Swedish Expedition to Queen Maud Land (see p. 80).

**CANADIAN RESEARCH IN GEODESY AND GEOPHYSICS**

[From *Nature*, Vol. 159, No. 4036, 8 March 1947, pp. 344-45.]

The National Research Council of Canada has re-organised its Associate Committee on Geodesy and Geophysics (formed in 1945) and has given it authority to gather information on, and to direct and co-ordinate research in the field of "geodesy and geophysics, including meteorology, hydrology, oceanography, seismology, vulcanology, magnetism, terrestrial electricity, tectonophysics, gravity, and any other subjects necessary to an integrated study of earth physics and geophysical prospecting". The chairman of the Committee is Professor J. T. Wilson, professor of geophysics, University of Toronto.

The Committee is being provided with funds for the award of grants in aid of specific research projects to persons competent to direct work in this field and who have the required laboratory facilities at their disposal. Much of the work that interests the Committee is carried out as part of their normal duties by several Government departments and is paid for by those departments.

The integration and stimulation of geophysical work in Canada are desirable for several reasons: (i) geophysical methods of mineral and oil prospecting have assumed great importance; (ii) the Pre-Cambrian shield is the biggest and richest area of basement rocks in the world, and its study will throw light on

earth structure as well as provide minerals; (iii) there are large areas of potentially useful oil-bearing rocks in western Canada; (iv) no other country is in so interesting a position geophysically, since Canada includes the north magnetic pole, and extends to the north geographical pole, and nearly to the magnetic axis; a larger part of the maximum auroral belt crosses Canada than any other country; (v) ionospheric studies for radio prediction have increased greatly during the War, and there are seven Canadian stations; the auroral belt will always produce peculiar effects; (vi) magnetic observations are lacking in northern Canada, where they are of value for navigation and of great interest near the magnetic pole.

More than a score of projects have already been initiated and further investigations are planned. One of the most fruitful subjects aided by the Committee has been the development of an airborne magnetometer. Fluxgate magnetometers were built by the National Research Council during the War; but these, it was known, would require extensive modifications before they could be adapted to airborne use. An early type was fitted to aeroplanes flying on Exercise Musk-Ox, in order to gain experience. In the United States, the Geological Survey had succeeded in adapting to geological use the magnetic aerial detector used in anti-submarine work, and it was thought that this instrument would be suitable for use in Canada. The National Research Council obtained three sets from the United States Navy and modified them so that they will be available to the Department of Mines and Resources for use in Canada during the summer of 1947.

Geophysical work will continue to be done and paid for by existing departments, companies and universities; but all this work will now be co-ordinated by the Associate Committee on Geodesy and Geophysics of the National Research Council. The Committee's work will not overlap that of the Geophysical Committee of the Geology Division of the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, which deals with matters such as assessment laws, customs, and tax rates, methods of procedure and professional ethics.

Steps have been taken to hold open meetings of the Associate Committee on Geodesy and Geophysics, the first of which was in connection with the annual meeting of the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy at the National Research Buildings in Ottawa on 23 January 1947. The Committee proposes also to start publishing a bibliography on Canadian geophysics which will include reports on its activities.

### THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS EXPLORING SOCIETY

The Public Schools Exploring Society was founded by the writer in 1932, to enable a number of British schoolboys each year to visit uninhabited country, to teach them to fend for themselves in the wilds, to widen their outlook and experience through having to overcome difficulties under primitive conditions, and to foster the spirit of adventure.

Although Public Schoolboys were selected to make a beginning, the term