

poses are to be appropriated to the University library as soon as they can be vacated. The site now occupied by the old Anatomical School, part of the pathological department and a portion of the unoccupied part in Downing street is to be reserved for the erection of new buildings for the medical, surgical and pathological departments.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

THE UNITED STATES FISH COMMISSION.

THE recent editorial of SCIENCE on the subject of the United States Fish Commission is unfortunately misleading in some of its statements, and, in justice not only to the Commissioner but to the entire personnel of the Commission, these should be corrected.

While the amount of scientific work accomplished under the direction of the Commission may not be as great as men of science might wish, it must be remembered that, after all, the primary object of the Commission is to preserve and increase the fisheries, and, so far as this can be accomplished by artificial propagation, this has been done. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that, aside from salaries, the sum to be expended in any one branch is determined by the appropriation committee, and the appropriation for 1898 contained \$132,000 for the propagation of food fishes and but \$10,500 for scientific research.

A comparison of the annual reports for a few years back will show that it is hardly just to say that 'the efficiency of the hatcheries and of methods of distribution cannot be advanced or even maintained.' In regard to the oyster the work of Dr. J. A. Ryder and others under the Fish Commission is well known, and it may be said that the investigations of the past two years compare favorably with those of previous years, and that important reports on the subject have been published.

In regard to the lobster it is hardly correct to say that 'we are not told how many eggs are killed at the hatcheries,' when the report of the Commissioner definitely says that '128,000,000 eggs were secured, producing 115,000,000 fry.' The rest of the matter is unjust because, as in the case of shad, the eggs were all obtained from animals taken for market,

and had they not been purchased by the Fish Commission the eggs would have been a total loss to mankind, and the adult lobster would have been killed instead of being returned to the water. While the sale of 'berried lobsters' is prohibited by law, very little regard is paid to the statute, as it is an easy matter to scrape off the eggs and sell the females without running the least risk. Instead of the work being analogous to 'taking all the babies born in New York City and depositing them in a baby farm,' it is like rescuing them from 'baby farms' and worse, and transferring them to a municipal orphan asylum.

That the Commissioner of Fisheries should have a practical and scientific knowledge of fishes is undeniable, but meanwhile let us at least be just to the present one. F. A. L.

[CERTAINLY the Fish Commission should be given its due. It is, as we stated in the article referred to, doing a useful work in the distribution of fry, but does F. A. L. really believe that this can be done in the most satisfactory manner under the direction of one ignorant of the life-history, habits and natural environment of fishes? What does F. A. L. regard as the probable outcome, should all the scientific departments, bureaus and surveys at Washington be placed under the charge of professional politicians and their relatives and supporters? Dishonesty would soon follow inefficiency, and the present condition of the Fish Commission, bad as it is, would be looked back to as relatively ideal. In mentioning Ryder our correspondent calls attention to work of the kind that the Commission is no longer able to carry out. If we differ from F. A. L. as to the efficiency with which the lobster is propagated, is the present Commissioner competent to decide who is right? We have no wish to suppress discussion in this JOURNAL, but it is unfortunate if men of science cannot unite in maintaining principles on which depend the scientific and economic work under the government.—ED. SCIENCE.]