the physiological building. On the first floor are the medical library and the department of art as applied to medicine. Work at the laboratory is directed by a committee of professors and instructors of the medical school. Dr. Milton C. Winternitz is chairman of the committee, and has a laboratory on the fourth floor. The second floor has been leased to the Carnegie Embryological Institute. The third floor will be devoted to work in clinical medicine and children's diseases and the fourth floor to the pathological department.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

NOTICE OF POSSIBLE SUSPENSION OF THE RULES OF NOMENCLATURE IN THE CASES OF HOLOTHURIA 1758 VS. PHYSALIA 1801, AND BOHADSCHIA 1833 VS. HOLOTHURIA 1791

IN accordance with the requirements prescribed by the International Congress of Zoology, notice to the zoological profession is hereby given that on or about October 1, 1917, the undersigned proposes to recommend to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature that the rules be suspended in the following cases:

Holothuria Linn., 1758 (type *physalis*), *vs. Physalia* Lamarck, 1801 (type *pelagica*). The effect of suspension will be to retain *Physalia* as generic name for the Portugese man of war.

Bohadschia Jaeger, 1833, *vs. Holothuria* Bruguière, 1791. The effect of the suspension will be to retain *Holothuria* for the sea cucumbers.

The motion for suspension includes the following points:

1. Suspend the rules in the case of the generic names in question;
2. Permanently reject *Holothuria* 1758, type *physalis;*
3. Validate *Physalia* 1801, type *pelagica* (syn. *physalis* 1758);
4. Accept *Holothuria* as dating from Bruguière, 1791, despite the existence of *Holothuria* 1758 (if rejected);
5. Said suspension is not to be construed as invalidating any specific name.

The grounds advanced for suspension will be:

(*a*) A strict application of the rules in these cases will result in greater confusion than uniformity, because

(*b*) The cases involve a transfer of generic names, almost universally accepted in the sense given above since 1791 (for *Holothuria*) and since 1801 (for *Physalia*), to genera in other groups in connection with which they have been used by only a very few authors during more than 100 years.

The undersigned cordially invites zoologists to communicate, not later than September 1, 1917, to him or to any other member of the commission, either their approval or disapproval of the proposed action.

C. W. STILES,
Secretary to Commission

DO THE FOWLER'S TOAD AND THE AMERICAN TOAD INTERBREED?

NOTING a communication under "Discussion and Correspondence" on pages 463 and 464, of the September 29, 1916, issue of SCIENCE, as regards the song of *Bufo fowleri* Putn., I would say that in over fifteen years of experience as observer and student of Amphibians, I have never been able *positively* to trace the clear, trilled song, lasting from 10 to 30 seconds, to any but the American toad, *Bufo americanus* Le Conte. In any large collection of both species, where both occur together, there are individuals which seem to combine the external characteristics of both species. In the study collection of the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, there are, for instance, a number of toads which at first glance would be identified as *Bufo americanus*. They have the large kidney-shaped parotoids, divergent cranial crests, spotted belly of *B. americanus,* but also the short, abrupt profile, proportionally narrow head, and much finer texture of skin, especially that of the belly, of *B. fowleri.* The color pattern alone can not always be relied upon, as *B. americanus* often has the narrow median pale line, the distinct black spots arranged in longitudinal rows, sometimes confluent, and the peculiar greenish gray ground color, of *B. fowleri,* and vice versa, *B. fowleri* has sometimes the reddish brown ground color, with indistinct vertebral streak and but few

scattered black spots and spotted undersides of *B. americanus*. All this, in conjunction with Mr. H. A. Allard's notes and observations, would lead one to believe that both species are closely related, and that they possibly interbreed occasionally, these forms with the characteristic marks, etc., of both species representing the hybrids.

In conclusion I will state that the typical *B. americanus* and the typical *B. fowleri* differ in the following characters, based on examination of hundreds of specimens, covering a period of ten or more years:

Bufo americanus Le Conte

1. Head broad, profile sloping towards tip of snout.
2. Cranial crests always diverging from the nostrils.
3. Skin covered with comparatively large round warts, often arranged in rows or groups, the former on the back, the latter on hind limbs. The undersides are more or less granular. The larger warts often have spiny tips, especially in large females.
4. The legs are stout, and moderately long, the foot large and thick, the fingers rather short and thick.

Bufo fowleri Putnam

1. Head narrow, very thick, profile abruptly rounded towards the tip of the snout.
2. Cranial crests sometimes parallel, often fused in the midline, forming a distinct lump between the eyes. This never occurs in *B. americanus*.
3. Skin finely granular above, with groups of larger warts. These warts are *never* spiny in this species. The under sides are either very finely granular or entirely smooth.
4. The legs are longer, in proportion to the body, than of *B. americanus*, the foot is rather delicate, fingers and toes are long and slender.

Richard Deckert

N. Y. Zoological Park,
New York City

THE POPULAR NAMES OF NORTH AMERICAN PLANTS

To the Editor of Science: In the course of our work here, considerable numbers of plants are frequently sent in by teachers to be named, and doubtless many similar requests for information are received by the officers of the provincial governments and the experiment stations throughout the United States. In replying to such enquiries the Latin name of the species is always given and the English name where such exists. It is clear, however, that pupils in the public schools, as well as many of their teachers, do not and can not reasonably be expected to take any interest in or to remember the Latin names of plants. This being so, it is highly desirable that every species of plant inhabiting the United States or Canada should have an English name. It is further desirable that the name should not be a local one, but should be applicable to the plant wherever it is found, from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean. If possible, the name should be such as to distinguish the plant from allied species, the name being based on some structural character such as height, hairiness, color of flowers, etc.; or on the habitat, such as marsh, mountain, wood, etc.; or on its use in the service of man, Indian names when such exist being adopted.

Where different genera have the same English name, some qualifying word will be specially necessary. For example, fireweed may mean either *Erechtites hieracifolia* Raf., or *Epilobium angustifolium* L. This ambiguity would be removed by calling the former white fireweed and the latter purple fireweed.

In order that each species of plant may have an English name, it would be necessary to draw up a list of the species inhabiting the United States and Canada, and it seems to the present writer that in drawing up such a list a very wide interpretation should be given to the meaning of the term species. At the present rate of progress, it will be many years before the "North American Flora"—the standard work on the subject for this continent—will be completed, and discussion as to the limits of so-called species may be expected to continue for a much longer period. Consequently, a provisional list should be issued, no attempt being made to define the limits of a species in too critical a manner, the popular English names not being suited for such fine distinctions. The common English name should be applied to aggregate rather than segregate species. For example, pipsissewa or prince's