

condition of his specimens leaves little to be desired. The insects in the collection number over 100,000, and the shells 52,000. Mr. Rippon's great wish was that his collections should not be broken up, but that they should have some home where they could be of public or private use.

The Rippon collection will enable the National Museum of Wales to teach natural history in a way it could not attempt without such ample resources. It will also enable the student to examine exotic types and be of great aid to the specialist in the determination of species. So complete is the series that such gaps as occur, either in the insect collection or the shell collections, can be easily filled as opportunity offers in the future. Many of the larger and more curious shells and insects are familiar through the pages of standard works on general natural history. No illustration in any book could, however, do justice to the wonderful coloring of some of these exotic insects. An idea of the extent of the collections in the Lepidoptera alone will be gained when it is stated that in the Papilionidæ (the Swallow-tails) there are over 3,000 specimens, and in the Nymphalidæ (or Fritillaries) there are over 5,000. Dragon-flies, May-flies, crickets, grasshoppers, the wonderful stick and leaf insects of the tropics, the many and curious flies belonging to the order Diptera, the beetles or Coleoptera which number over 40,000 specimens, the ants, bees and wasps or Hymenoptera are too numerous to do more than mention.

The shells, or Mollusca, are exceedingly numerous and well represented in all the large and beautiful forms from the coral reefs of the Pacific, among which may be mentioned the Cones, Cowries, Olives, Woodcock shells, Volutes, and many others. There is an example of the rare Orange Cowry, used by the natives of Fiji and New Caledonia as a badge of royalty, and many Volutes for which high prices have been given. Many large and beautifully colored bivalve shells crowd the cabinets.

The collection of minerals comprises about 3,000 specimens many of which are from such widely distant parts as Siberia, Japan, South

America, etc., all carefully named according to Dana's Manual.

#### THE BRITISH MUSEUM AND THE WAR

THE British government has been induced to abandon the intention to use the British Museum at Bloomsbury for the purposes of the Air Board and the Natural History Museum at South Kensington for other government departments. Lord Sudeley directed attention to the proposed appropriation of these buildings in a question asked in the House of Lords on January 9, and, in reply, Earl Curzon said that, as regards the British Museum, he was glad to state that for the accommodation of the Air Ministry it was no longer necessary to appropriate that building. As to the Natural History Museum, it had been found, after detailed examination, that any attempt to convert the galleries into public offices would involve the closing of the building to the public, extensive internal rearrangements, and the consumption of an enormous amount of labor and material and very considerable delay. In these circumstances it had been decided that there was no necessity sufficiently urgent to warrant the use of the museum as had been contemplated. *Nature* remarks:

This decision has given much satisfaction to all who cherish regard for national prestige and understand the intellectual stimulus or practical value of the collections in our national museums. What astonishes us, however, is that Sir Alfred Mond, the First Commissioner of Works, and a son of the late Dr. Ludwig Mond, should have placed himself in such an indefensible position by putting the scheme before the government. It is difficult to comprehend also why, before deciding to requisition the building, the government did not inquire as to whether such action was imperatively needed, and consult the trustees and other responsible authorities as to what its consequences would be. If that had been done, a storm of protest would have been saved, and Earl Curzon would not have had to confess in the House of Lords that there was no real necessity for the proposed occupation, which would, indeed, have been more like the act of an invader than of a government entrusted with the care of national interests in every direction. The trustees of the museum, at

their meeting on January 12, expressed their gratitude, on behalf of the nation whose treasures they hold in trust, to the newspapers which so unanimously gave voice to the public disapproval of a proposal which threatened the safety of the museum and its collections.

#### SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

MEMORIAL exercises were held at the Johns Hopkins University on February third, in commemoration of Professor Franklin Paine Mall. President Goodnow presided and addresses were delivered by Professor Florence R. Sabin, Professor Lewellys F. Barker, Professor William H. Welch, of the Johns Hopkins Medical School, and President Robert S. Woodward, of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

SURGEON-GENERAL SIR ALFRED KEOGH, director-general of British Army Medical Services, has been permitted to resume his duties as general executive officer to the Imperial College of Science and Technology, and will be replaced at the War Office from March 1 by Colonel T. H. J. C. Goodwin, Royal Army Medical Corps, until recently the assistant director of medical services to the British Recruiting Mission in America. He will be appointed acting director-general of the Army Services.

DIRECTOR RUSSELL H. CHITTENDEN, of the Sheffield Scientific School and professor of physiology at Yale University, has left for Europe to represent the United States on an important Government commission to England, France, and Italy. He will probably be away for a period of from three to six months. During his absence Professor Percy F. Smith, will be the acting director of the Sheffield Scientific School.

DEAN PHILIP A. SHAFFER, of Washington, University and major in the food division of the Surgeon-General's Office, Washington, D. C., is making a tour of the cantonments, before leaving for France to take charge of the food division with the expeditionary forces.

DR. FRANK SCHLESINGER, director of the Allegheny Observatory, has been appointed aeronautical engineer in the U. S. Signal

Corps. He will have charge of the instruments that are mounted on aeroplanes and will form the connecting link between the construction department of the Signal Corps and the National Research Council. During his temporary absence from the observatory Dr. Frank C. Jordan will be in charge.

DR. C. JUDSON HERRICK, professor of neurology in the University of Chicago, has recently been commissioned major in the Sanitary Corps of the National Army and has been assigned to active service as neurohistologist in the neurosurgical laboratory of the Surgeon-General's Office, located at the Johns Hopkins Medical School, Baltimore.

PROFESSOR BRADLEY M. DAVIS has been granted leave of absence from the University of Pennsylvania to take up work with Dr. Raymond Pearl in the Statistical Division of the Food Administration, Washington, D. C.

MR. E. A. GOLDMAN, of the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, has been commissioned a major in the Sanitary Corps of the National Army, for the purpose of investigating methods for the control of the rat pest in its relations to the army. As is well known, the common house rat exists in enormous numbers both in this country and especially in France, where it is reported to transmit certain diseases among the soldiers.

DR. K. L. MARK, head of the chemistry department and of the school of general science at Simmons College, Boston, has been granted a leave of absence for the duration of the war to accept a commission as captain in the Sanitary Corps of the Army.

AMONG the professors of the State University of Iowa and instructors who have joined the colors recently are: B. P. Fleming, professor of mechanical engineering, captain in the engineering corps; H. B. Whaling, associate professor in the newly organized school of commerce, aviation; F. C. Brown, associate professor of physics, captain in the ordnance division, Washington, D. C.; I. L. Pollock, instructor in political science, United States War Trade board, Washington, D. C.; D. A.