

from the Arctic Circle, where the yearly frost-free period is about 97 days, some appreciation can be had of the difficulties that prevail.

According to the report, the Sitka station propagates and tests, and to some extent disseminates, all manner of plants that promise to be useful in Alaska. The chief line of work at the Fairbanks station is the growing of grain, the testing of the adaptability of varieties of grain, and the dissemination in small quantities of the surplus seed grain produced. At Rampart, the chief lines of work are the production of new varieties of wheat, barley and oats by means of hybridization, the testing and selection of hybrids, and the increase of those proving valuable. Hardy alfalfa is grown, as well as vegetables, for the purpose of ascertaining the best cultural methods to be pursued. Cattle and sheep breeding work is conducted at the Kodiak station, and at Matanuska experiments are made with growing grain and sugar beets. A small nursery has also been started here for propagating hardy nursery stock for distribution in the Matanuska Valley.

In 1918 a distribution of seed grain was made to a number of farmers in the Tanana Valley in an effort to induce them to begin grain production on an independent basis. The results were so satisfactory that the experiment was repeated in 1919. In that year 22 farmers in the Tanana Valley produced 1,128 bushels of spring wheat, 2,811 bushels of oats, and 121½ bushels of barley. During the same season the station at Fairbanks produced 303 bushels of spring wheat, 774 bushels of oats, and 125 bushels of barley. A small flour mill was installed at the Fairbanks station in 1918, where Alaska-grown wheat has been milled into an excellent bread flour.

The 1918 report of the Alaska Agricultural Experiment Stations can be had upon request of the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

REPRODUCTION OF MICROSCOPIC UNDER-SEA LIFE

THE American Museum of Natural History has reproduced in glass and wax a two-inch

section of sea-bottom, with its characteristic plant and animal life, magnified more than 15,000 times. The exhibit is known as the Bryozoan Group, taking its name from the sea-animals popularly called sea-mats and sea-mosses, which it principally depicts.

The shells of these minute organisms form encrustations on sea-weeds and pebbles and on shells of larger animals. They are extremely beautiful in their intricate form and coloring. The "plumed worm" has especially fine colors. Other microscopic creatures and marine plants combine to make this group of especial interest.

The glass-blowing was done by Mr. Herman Mueller, and the coloring by Mr. Show Shimotori, while the wax portions of the group are the work of Mr. Chris E. Olsen. The entire exhibit was prepared and assembled under the expert direction of Mr. Roy W. Miner, associate curator of the department of invertebrate zoology.

MATTERS OF SCIENTIFIC INTEREST IN CONGRESS¹

THE bill for a tariff on scientific instruments, etc. (H. R. 7785) was brought up on the Senate calendar on April 5, but was passed over. On April 28, Mr. Knox offered an amendment providing for the exemption from import duty of "guaranteed disks, ten inches or more in diameter, for astronomical telescopes."

The appropriations in the Second Deficiency Act include: \$75,000 for continuation of the investigation of the mineral resources of Alaska, to be available also during 1921; and \$47,100 for the continuation of magnetic and geodetic work by the Coast and Geodetic Survey.

The legislative, executive and judicial appropriation bill (H. R. 12610), carrying appropriations for the Bureau of Standards, passed the House on March 4, and the Senate on April 1. After agreement to the conference reports the bill was sent to the President, carrying an amendment introduced by Mr.

¹From the *Proceedings* of The Washington Academy of Sciences.