

Experiment Station for Investigation of Domestic Animals, Professor I. I. Ivanov (sperm studies), Khlebný Pereulok 9, 9, Moscow.

Central Institute of Work, Dr. K. Ch. Kektcheyev, director of physiological investigations, and associates, Moscow.

Agricultural Academy, Madame Nikolayeva (cytology), Petrovskaya-Razumovskaya, Moscow.

Zoological Institute, Professor Michael Savadovsky (sex studies); Professor Savadovsky (general biology), Zoological Garden, State University, Moscow.

Zoological Museum, Professor Koshevnikov (entomology), State University, Moscow.

Laboratory of Experimental Zoology and Genetics, Professor I. A. Philiptchenko (genetics), Dr. Vitaly M. Isayev (experimental zoology), First State University, Vassily Ostrov, Petrograd.

## QUOTATIONS

### FREE MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES<sup>1</sup>

A QUESTION addressed to Mr. Baldwin by Sir John Butcher yesterday revives the doubt whether it is wise to demand an entrance fee of visitors to the British Museum. The proposal, contained in the Increase of Fees Bill, which has passed its second reading, is that the public should pay for admittance the sum of sixpence on four days of the week; and it is calculated that an annual sum of £6,000 will thereby be raised for the finances of the museum. The government appear to entertain the belief, or perhaps only a pious hope, that the number of visitors will not be diminished in consequence; but the analogy of the National Gallery will not serve them. The entrance fee there, on students' days, is charged in order mainly to keep the general public out and leave the gallery more free to students; and there is no question that it has that effect. It may be assumed, therefore, that fewer people will go to the museum in future if the tax is imposed. We can not but hold the proposed tax to be a retrograde step. It is contrary to the traditions of the museum, contrary to the tendency of the age to regard museums and galleries as institutions of real educational value, and contrary to the whole educa-

tional policy of the country, which is to put knowledge more and more at the free disposal of all. It is a direct tax on knowledge.

Nobody can hope to understand much of what he sees at the British Museum, if he sees it only once, or attempts to race around all the rooms in an hour or two. Beauty, of which the museum is full, does not yield up its secret forthwith. But to any determined amateur, with the necessary curiosity and time at his disposal, the secret will reveal itself in the end, and he will be the better citizen for it. There is no reason why almost any Londoner should not, if the museums and galleries were always open for nothing, be able to constitute himself a connoisseur of beauty. The National Gallery, which has fewer free days than formerly, is without rival in the world; all that it needs is a public that understands what it has to confer—a catholic appreciation of painting, of all schools—after the requisite number, more for some and fewer for others, of visits. It is the same with the British Museum at Bloomsbury, a cathedral of the humanities, and at South Kensington of nature, also unrivalled. Only a narrow policy would seek to put a limit on the free entry of the general public into both places. Culture, if it is to exert its humanizing influence, must be spread in the widest commonalty. The exquisite shapes in the Tanagra Room, the stately avenue of books in the King's Library, the stones that still speak of man's struggle with the mastodon, are too good to be treated as if they were part of a circus or a cinema show. They and their companion collections in the national possession can not be looked at and visited too often. If funds be wanted for their upkeep, let vulgarity find them. It is ubiquitous, and could bear the tax without feeling it. But let the two principal national museums be open all days of the week free to all. At a great cost these collections have been founded and assembled; they were meant for the general enjoyment, and those who need their soothing and kindly influence most in their lives are often those who can least afford a fee to go to see them. When so many means of locomotion now converge on central London, it would be a monstrous paradox if what is most worth seeing there were made more difficult of approach.—*The London Times*.

<sup>1</sup> The British government has withdrawn its plan to charge an entrance fee to the British Museum.