The purpose for which the naval oil lands were set aside was to provide reserves for the future. In order to do this in the best manner the oil should be, wherever possible, retained in the ground. Where this is not possible, however, it should be retained in tankage above ground.

This oil is an important part of the national insurance. At the present rate of production there is estimated to be but twenty years' of oil supply within the limits of the United States. When this is exhausted we will be dependent upon foreign sources for our supply. In time of war such supply will certainly be jeopardized and possibly cut off. Unless the navy has conserved in this country sufficient oil wherewith to fight a war, our national security is seriously endangered.

The general board of the navy, which has made a careful study of the problem of national defense, has recommended a presidential commission to give more careful study of the fuel question. In view of present conditions I have decided to appoint this commission now. This commission will have the same access to data and information contained with the governmental departments as was granted to the United States Coal Commission (H. R. 12,377) Sixty-seventh Congress. The commission will have as its mission the general study of this problem, but specifically it will review the situation in each one of the navy's reserves and endeavor to ascertain whether it will be possible, by assignment of additional public lands, transfers, trades, purchases or otherwise, to create larger or better protected reserves than those existing at present. This not only pertains to the United States proper, but, in addition, to such oil lands as might exist in Alaska.

It is also announced that President Coolidge, by executive order, has created in Mery County, Utah, the first helium reserve in the United States. It is designated as helium reserve No. 1 and consists of 7,100 acres of land in which the greater part of the mineral title is vested in the United States. The reserve is withdrawn from all forms of settlement, location, sale or entry.

Several prospecting permits on the area were issued three years ago and an oil company drilled to a depth of between 3,000 and 4,000 feet. No oil was found, but a helium bearing gas was encountered, which, under the terms of the general leasing law, is reserved to the United States. The extent and value of the deposits of helium are not definitely known, and the lands are still subject to various prospecting permits, but to conserve the helium for government needs, Secretary Work recommended to the President that a reserve be established.

BLACKWATER FEVER IN RHODESIA

ACCORDING to the *British Medical Journal* letters from Dr. J. Gordon Thomson, director of protozoology, London School of Tropical Medicine, who is at present in Rhodesia investigating blackwater fever, report that he has examined for spirochaetes the blood of six patients suffering from this disease. He adopted the method of triple centrifugalization of the blood used by Blanchard and Lefrou (1922), but so far has been unable to confirm their results or to demonstrate spirochaetes of any description. Examination of specimens with dark ground illumination, however, showed numerous fine threads or filaments, varying in length and thickness and possibly derived from the blood platelets, which simulated spirochaetes very closely indeed. Dr. Thomson has also attempted to make cultures—chiefly on Noguchi's medium—of any spirochaete which might be present, but his results have been negative. Inoculation of guinea-pigs has also failed to produce evidence of the existence of a spirochaete. Again, he makes mention of the fact that relapsing fever is fairly common among the native population, and that acute infective jaundice undoubtedly occurs, so it is quite possible that either of these diseases might be superimposed on an attack of malaria or blackwater fever. So far as he has gone Dr. Thomson is inclined to the view that blackwater fever is a manifestation of chronic malaria, and is due to some obscure haemolytic phenomenon caused by repeated attacks of malignant tertian malaria. In the parts of Rhodesia where malaria does not exist there is no blackwater fever, and, conversely, in the areas where malaria is prevalent blackwater fever is common.

BOTANICAL EXPEDITION TO SOUTH AMERICA

PROFESSOR G. S. BRYAN, of the department of botany of the University of Wisconsin, and Francis Macbride, of the Field Museum of Chicago, have returned from an expedition to South America made under the auspices of the Field Museum, bringing with them 6,000 specimens. Professor Bryan collected algae, fungi, lichens, liverwort, mosses, ferns and their allies, and Mr. Macbride collected specimens of flowering plants. Half of Professor Bryan's collection has been given to the Field Museum, and half of it will be placed in the botanical museum of the University of Wisconsin. The expedition, which sailed from New York last February, went *via* the Panama Canal, down the west coast of South America to Callao. From Callao, Professor Bryan and Mr. Macbride went to Lima, then by train over the western mountains to Cerro de Pasco, which is 14,200 feet above sea level. With a pack train they went over the mountains, 75 miles further into the interior, and established a base camp. They made three separate trips from there into the interior, near the headwaters of the Amazon River, which is practically a wilderness with only a few small native settlements. These