

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE IMPORTATION OF SCIENTIFIC SPECIMENS AND APPARATUS INTO GREAT BRITAIN

As the result of a report by the Association of British Zoologists, the council of the British Association in February, 1931, appointed a committee to consider action with a view to the amelioration of the customs regulations affecting the importation of scientific specimens and apparatus. Following upon discussion between officers of the association and the Customs House authorities, the latter have most kindly supplied the association with a memorandum on the reliefs from customs duties on scientific instruments and cinematograph films, and from the import prohibitions on plumage likely to be of use to scientific workers, together with a note on procedure in respect of the importation of scientific specimens preserved in spirit.

The memorandum on scientific instruments and cinematograph films was supplied confidentially to enable the association to advise *bona fide* scientific workers, but not for general publication, since some of the relaxations are extra-statutory and liable to modification or withdrawal as the interests of the revenue may demand. The British Association is, however, prepared to advise on specific applications from scientific workers or societies. Enquiries should be addressed to the secretary of the British Association at Burlington House, London, W.1.

It emerged in the course of discussion that some of the difficulties which have been encountered by scientific workers under the customs regulations might have been avoided by previous communication with the Board of Customs and Excise.

THE UNIVERSITY OF PORTO RICO AND THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TENTATIVE arrangements for cooperation in research and extension work between the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the College of Agriculture of the University of Porto Rico, at Mayaguez, were made by Dr. C. W. Warburton, director of extension work, and by Dr. James T. Jardine, chief of the Office of Experiment Stations, in the course of a brief visit to the island, from which they returned on December 21. This cooperation was authorized by an act of congress, approved on March 4, which provided that the several experiment station and extension acts should apply to Porto Rico, beginning on July 1, with an initial appropriation of \$15,000 for research and \$50,000 for extension work, these sums to be increased respectively by \$5,000 and \$10,000 annually until the totals to which Porto Rico is entitled under the federal act are reached.

The insular government of Porto Rico now maintains an agricultural experiment station and an agricultural extension service, and these will be included in the cooperative agreement. For many years this department has maintained an experiment station at Mayaguez, the work of which will now be coordinated with that of the cooperative insular station. The extension work on the island will be expanded to include home economics and boys' and girls' club work.

"Though Porto Rico is feeling the effects of the world-wide depression severely, harvesting of the largest crop of sugar ever produced on the island is now beginning, and the unemployment situation there will be greatly relieved," according to Dr. Warburton. "Failure to sell the 1931 tobacco crop at satisfactory prices has curtailed planting for the 1932 crop, vigorous efforts having been made in some sections to secure an agreement among growers to plant no tobacco at this time. The 1931 production of coffee was very low, this crop not yet having recovered from the 1928 hurricane. Agricultural and educational agencies are conducting a vigorous campaign for the production of larger supplies of food crops for local use, in an effort to feed the rapidly increasing population and reduce the imports of foodstuffs."

TO GUADALUPE ISLAND

THE fascination of studies in island life is answerable for the latest expedition to Guadalupe, the little-visited volcanic island 140 miles west of northern Lower California. Mr. Templeton Crocker, of San Francisco, recently visited this remarkable island on his yacht *Zaca* in the interest of the California Academy of Sciences and spent three days (November 14 to 16) exploring the island and adjacent waters. Mr. Crocker was accompanied by Mr. John Thomas Howell, botanist of the California Academy of Sciences, who conducted the scientific studies. From several stations on the island collections were obtained of insects, birds, fishes, plants and land and marine shells. Although the season was at low ebb for extensive plant collections, the wet season just having begun, thirty-three collections of native vascular plants were made, four of which have not been known heretofore from the island. In addition to these vascular plants many mosses, hepatics, and lichens were collected. Among the specimens of special interest brought back is a 300-pound Giant Black Marlin Spearfish (*Makaira marlina*), an interesting big game fish recently described from the Pacific off Cape San Lucas. This specimen was taken by Mr. Crocker personally and brought to the academy, where it is now being prepared as a permanent exhibit to be placed in the Steinhart Aquarium.