

### HOMER COLLAR SKEELS

HOMER COLLAR SKEELS, botanist in the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., died on January 3 at East St. Louis, Illinois.

In 1895 Mr. Skeels entered the Michigan Agricultural College, specializing in botany, and graduated in 1898 with the degree of bachelor of science. Mr. Skeels entered the Bureau of Plant Industry of the United States Department of Agriculture in November, 1907, and at the time of his death was a botanist in the Division of Foreign Plant Introduction of that bureau.

During the years spent in the service of the Depart-

ment of Agriculture, Mr. Skeels built up what may be rightly considered the largest and most complete collection of economic foreign seeds in the United States, if not in the world. This now includes nearly 45,000 samples. As a result of his work, Mr. Skeels had acquired a nation-wide reputation as an expert in the identification of seeds.

He was a member of the Botanical Society of America, the Botanical Society of Washington, the Biological Society of Washington, the Washington Academy of Sciences and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

P. R.

## SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

### GIFTS TO THE BRITISH NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

ACCORDING to the London *Times* the trustees of the Rowland Ward Bequest have presented to the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, three mounted specimens: the head of a female Bighorn sheep from North America, a rare yellow-handed Titi monkey from Brazil and a black-headed Uakari monkey from the Amazons. A collection of mammals, mostly large ungulates, shot by Major P. H. G. Powell-Cotton in north East Africa, has been presented by him to the museum, among them a Sudani giant eland; with the skins are complete skeletons.

The late Mr. C. C. Lacaita, who presented to the museum during his lifetime his monocotyledons and Sikkim plants, has bequeathed to the department of botany the remainder of his collection, some 40,000 sheets, mainly from Italy and Spain, but also collected from Greece, Styria and France. The richness in critical Italian plants is the more appreciated since the museum herbarium was poor in Italian material. Mr. Lacaita's cabinets accompany the herbarium as the gift of his daughter, Mrs. Windsor Clive. Colonel A. H. Wolley Dod has presented his collection of British brambles, containing over 1,000 specimens, largely from Cheshire. Some 900 plants from the Cambridge Expedition to British Guiana have been received through Dr. G. C. Carter, the leader of the expedition, and T. G. Tutin, its botanist.

Among additions to the department of geology are a slab, 8 feet high, containing a reconstructed group of palm-leaves from the Tertiary beds of Italy (the gift of Lord Rothschild), and a small assemblage of British fossil vertebrates, including Eocene mammal and bird remains from the Isle of Wight and Liassic reptiles from Dorset and Yorkshire; these have been collected and presented by Mr. S. L. Wood. Gifts to the department of minerals include crystallized sprays of native gold from the City Deep Mine, Witwaters-

rand (from the Central Mining and Investment Corporation) and tektites, resembling the Australian "Black Men's Buttons," from Billiton, in the Dutch East Indies, presented by Engineer R. J. van Lier. A Chinese carving in fluorspar has been purchased as an example of the working of this material. A large series of rocks and minerals has been collected for the department by Mr. W. Campbell Smith in the United States and in Canada. Material was also selected by him from the duplicates of the U. S. National Museum and the U. S. Geological Survey.

### THE GEOGRAPHIC PLAYERS, INC.

A GEOGRAPHIC theater has been organized in New York City by a group of geographers, explorers and scientific men. Members of the new theater have formed the Geographic Players, Inc., and will present programs combining motion pictures, lantern slides, lectures and native music and dancing.

The aims of the new theater, according to Dr. Roy Chapman Andrews, one of the organizers, as reported in *The New York Times*, are:

To establish a legitimate theater with stage and screen where the world's geographers, explorers and scientists may present their experiences and records in a popular way.

To foster through the spoken word and pictures appreciation for reality and natural beauty, which has been developed by scientific researchers who work with camera, microscope and telescope, whether under sea, on the earth or in the air.

And to present this knowledge of the truth of life and the customs of the different peoples who live in the world, so that it may become of educational and inspirational value to the public.

The Geographic Players will present all their programs for the time being at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. Carveth Wells, the explorer, will be master of ceremonies.

The first program will be on China and will be given on Sunday, January 21, starting at 8:30 P. M. It will be directed by Princess der Ling, first lady-in-waiting to the late Empress Dowager of China. The Princess also will speak on her experiences at the Manchu Court.

Other participants will be Dr. Andrews, who will show motion pictures and lecture on his explorations in China; Lucille Douglass, archeologist, presenting painted slides of Far Eastern gardens, and Chester Su and Miss Han, who will give a program of Chinese music.

The people and life of Mexico will be the subject of the second program by the players, on Sunday night, February 4. Russell Hastings Millward, the explorer, is director of the program. He will also show motion pictures and lecture on the Mexican jungle and its products, present-day life and customs of the Mexican people and native dances and music.

Major James C. Sawders, explorer, will illustrate his lecture on the ancient civilization of the Mayas and Aztecs in Mexico with lantern slides. Motion pictures of Popocatepetl and the Floating and Borda Gardens of Mexico, to be shown by Julia Barrett Rublee, artist, and a series of songs and dances by native Mexicans, directed by Mrs. Mary Richards Bauer, well-known musical director, will be other features of this program.

The Italian program on Sunday night, February 18, will be supervised by Professor G. A. Borgese, Italian author and visiting professor at Smith College. He will speak on Italian literature. Maestro Sturani, of the Metropolitan Opera Company, will be heard in a program of Italian songs, and motion pictures will be presented of the most interesting places in Italy, featuring a travelogue of famous Italian gardens and villas.

Among members of the advisory board are: Dr. Mary T. Woolley, president of Mount Holyoke College; Dr. Wallace W. Atwood, president of Clark University; Dr. Charles B. Davenport, Dr. Ferdinand W. Haasis and Dr. Morris Steggerda, of the Carnegie Institution; Professor Mark A. May, of Yale University; Dr. L. A. Wolfanger, of Columbia University, and Dr. Erwin Raisz, of Harvard University, and Dr. Elmer D. Merrill, director of the New York Botanical Garden.

#### WILD-LIFE RESTORATION

PRELIMINARY investigations by the President's committee on wild-life restoration appointed by Secretary Wallace on January 2 to outline a course of action to aid in the restoration of game by utilizing for that purpose some of the marginal farm lands to be retired from unprofitable crop production, indicate that the additions to the public domain contemplated may

serve important economic as well as game restoration purposes.

Reforestation, flood and erosion control, sustenance farms for the partial support of numbers of older employed residents who would practice game and forest management in the tracts, and use of Federal relief workers to execute projects requiring considerable labor, are contemplated. Sources of income from forest products and recreational privileges, with a view to development of self-supporting perpetual management, are being explored.

Coordination of Federal departmental functions in utilization of the areas to be acquired is envisaged by the committee in development of the lands to the point of greatest public usefulness. Cooperation of the Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Soil Erosion Service, Bureau of Biological Survey and any divisions of the Federal Government identified with natural resources under Federal control is contemplated. Cooperation of the Special Senate Committee on Conservation of Wild-Life Resources and bureaus has already been enlisted.

The committee, composed of Thomas H. Beck, Wilton, Conn., chairman; J. N. Darling, Des Moines, Iowa, and Professor Aldo Leopold, Madison, Wis., has proceeded with early development of the game restoration plan following its first meeting on January 6. It is announced that all the projects to be evolved will probably be confined to pre-determined sections where the land retirement proposal will be effected, and to Federal lands already available.

In a letter, dated January 9, to all state game and conservation officials and interested organizations the committee states:

The plan contemplates the restoration of migratory waterfowl and upland game. The need for such a program is apparent to every student of wild-life conservation and restoration in the United States, and it is obvious that the work should be confined to acquisition and restoration of suitable nesting areas for natural propagation purposes.

This committee seeks information from all authorized sources, including government departments, state officials and leaders of interested organizations, and aims to coordinate, in one unified program, the best ideas of all interested parties.

While there is a vast amount of information available in government bureaus and departments, we will be glad to receive information and suggestions with regard to suitable natural propagation areas which you may know of and which come under the classification of waste or sub-marginal land.

Stating that organizations should contact their nearest state game commissioner through whom localized projects may be recommended and brought to the committee's attention, the letter concludes: