

that part of our population which is least worthy of existence and to protect society from the results of its own irresponsible breeding.

We all admit that our social engine has stalled, and a succession of political, economic and sociological drivers have been pulling and pushing every movable gadget in a futile effort to make it start. May not a biological bystander suggest the possibility that some one has watered the gasoline?

It would be expedient to conclude this survey with an innocuous prophecy of the evolutionary future of man's wisdom teeth, little toes, head hair and other degenerating appurtenances. It would be inspiring to produce evidence that man's body is evolving into a perfect organism and that his mentality is growing apace like the national debt. Unfortunately, I am unaware of any marked improvement of man's evolu-

tionary status since the end of the glacial period. On the other hand, distinctively regressive or degenerative trends, general to the contemporaneous human species, are possibly confined to a few features of the organism—perhaps notably the dentition. What we must avoid is a progressive deterioration of mankind as a result of the reckless and copious breeding of protected inferiors. We have not the knowledge to breed supermen, but we can limit the reproduction of criminals and mental defectives. Let us cease to delude ourselves with the belief that education, religion or other measures of social amelioration can transform base metal into gold. Public enemies must be destroyed—not reformed. We need a biological new deal which will segregate and sterilize the anti-social and the mentally unfit. Intelligent artificial selection should replace natural selection.

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

BIRD SANCTUARIES IN NEW YORK CITY

THE Park Department of New York City has under consideration a plan presented by the National Association of Audubon Societies for preserving the remaining natural wild-life areas in the city by making them bird sanctuaries. The association, according to *The New York Times*, proposes to establish sanctuaries in five of the larger parks, and the department has agreed to consult the society in preparing plans for these parks and to follow its suggestions if possible. The new sanctuaries will be in addition to those already in operation in Central Park. Dr. Robert P. Allen is in charge of the plans of the association.

According to Mr. Allen, some wild fowl and song birds still nest in the city, but their numbers are decreasing every year as the parks and vacant areas are cleared and improved. It is proposed to fence off and keep unspoiled those areas still in a natural state. In addition he would plant various shrubs for ground cover and to provide food.

In Van Cortlandt Park it is hoped to have set aside the twenty-acre tract north of the boating lake, which has been a natural sanctuary for generations, although considerably reduced from its former size. It was here that last spring the rare glossy ibis was observed, and Virginia rail still nest there regularly. In addition to shrubs, wild rice and other marsh plants would be planted in this area.

In Queens it is proposed to fence and improve the existing protected area in Alley Pond Park, which includes a pond and about forty acres of upland, and to set aside the swamp area in Kissena Park as a second reservation for herons, ducks and other marsh birds.

In the New Springville Park sanctuary on Staten Island Mr. Allen suggests that a salt-water pond be created by damming up the marsh area. This would increase the size of the preserve to 100 acres and would provide the only nesting place in the city for salt-water birds. This tract also needs fencing and further planting.

In Brooklyn it is proposed that the pond on the Dyker Beach Park golf course be preserved as a sanctuary. Even under present conditions it is inhabited by rails, least bitterns, Florida gallinules and other water birds.

The Central Park sanctuaries established last year have proved to be a great success. A record number of birds was observed in Central Park this season. One hundred and thirty-two species were counted, compared with only one hundred and twenty-seven last year. The only birds that now nest regularly in the park are English sparrows, starlings, flickers, purple grackles, song sparrows and occasionally screech owls. It is proposed, if possible, to lay out nature trails, with every tree and shrub properly labelled. Mr. Allen considers that the Fifty-ninth Street lake is well adapted to water fowl and suggests the planting of more water plants in the park as an inducement for them to use it.

FIFTH ANNUAL FIELD CONFERENCE OF PENNSYLVANIA GEOLOGISTS

THE fifth annual meeting of the Field Conference of Pennsylvania Geologists was held at Philadelphia from May 31 through June 3. Headquarters were established at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, from which place all field trips started.

The local committee consisted of Professor E. H. Watson, of Bryn Mawr College, *chairman*; Samuel Gordon, of the Academy of Natural Sciences, *secretary*; Dr. B. L. Miller, of Lehigh University; Professor Frederick Ehrenfeld, of the University of Pennsylvania, and S. Herbert Hamilton, of the Atlantic Refining Company. The committee was assisted by other geologists from the U. S. Geological Survey, the DuPont Company, Bryn Mawr College and the University of Pennsylvania.

Registration and museum tours occupied the morning of the thirty-first, and in the afternoon the party divided into two groups for field trips. Trip A under Dr. Lincoln Dryden, of Bryn Mawr College, visited places of physiographic interest, chiefly southwest of Philadelphia, while Trip B, led by Mr. Gordon, paid attention to localities of mineralogic and petrologic interest near the city. On June 1 the entire conference joined in Trip C, an all-day excursion led by Dr. Watson. The party spent most of the time observing the crystalline rocks of the Piedmont north and west of Philadelphia. At localities of special interest, short lectures were delivered by authorities in the field, including Drs. F. Bascom, J. Gillson and D. Wyckoff. Excursion D on Sunday, June 2, was attended by the entire conference. Led by Dr. B. L. Miller, who was assisted by Drs. Watson, Dryden and E. T. Wherry, its chief objective was to observe the controversial area of the Chester Valley westward from Philadelphia, but other points of interest were the Valley Forge Cement Company's plant with newly installed flotation process, Valley Forge Park and exposures of the Triassic. On Monday a special excursion, Trip E, visited the Coastal Plain region of New Jersey. This trip was conducted by Professor Ehrenfeld and Dr. Henry B. Kümmel, state geologist of New Jersey.

On the evening of the thirty-first, the University of Pennsylvania tendered a complimentary smoker to the conference. In the unavoidable absence of President Gates, Dean Musser delivered the address of welcome. The annual dinner was scheduled for the evening of June 1. Dr. Gillson served as toastmaster. The dinner concluded with a business meeting.

The 1936 conference is to be held in conjunction with the members of the New York Geological Association, which has already accepted the Pennsylvania Conference's invitation to meet jointly in the anthracite fields. Therefore, a joint committee to consider the place and time of meeting and prepare the program and schedule of trips was appointed.

A total registration of 86 was recorded for the meetings this year with an actual attendance of at least a hundred, the largest number yet present. Besides Pennsylvanians from all parts of the Common-

wealth, geologists attended from Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Delaware and the District of Columbia. The record number was due largely to the controversial nature of much of the geology, especially the structural relations and age determinations of the formations of the Chester Valley region, problems which have recently drawn considerable interest among geologists in the eastern part of the United States. Despite the size of the party and the necessity of moving a motorcade of 25 to 30 cars through the thickly settled Philadelphia district, the trips were handled without difficulty, thanks to a trained escort of the Pennsylvania State Highway Patrol. The efficiency of the local committee in caring for all details is greatly to be commended, especially the time and effort which its members spent in preparing a forty-three page guide booklet and arranging a detailed itinerary.

BRADFORD WILLARD,
Secretary-Treasurer

THE INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMICAL UNION

THE fifth general assembly of the International Astronomical Union is meeting from July 9 to 17 in Paris under the presidency of Dr. Frank Schlesinger, director of the Yale University Observatory. Science Service reports that conferences will be held on plans for cooperative observations, questions of stellar notation and various special matters of international interest.

Astronomers from Soviet Russia will sit in the assembly for the first time, and representatives of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences will tell of plans being made to observe the sun's total eclipse in 1936. Germany is not yet a member of the union, but many Germans have been invited in a "consultative" capacity. Some thirty other nations are to be represented. There will be an exhibition of astronomical documents and apparatus. The Astronomical Society of France on the evening of July 14, the national holiday in France, will tender a banquet on the top floor of the Eiffel Tower.

President Schlesinger will deliver the principal address. Other American astronomers who will attend include: Dr. W. S. Adams, director of Mt. Wilson Observatory; Dr. B. Boss, director of Dudley Observatory; Professor S. Boothroyd, Cornell University; Dr. D. Brouwer, Yale University; Professor E. W. Brown, Yale University; Dr. A. J. Cannon, Harvard College Observatory; Professor W. K. Green, Amherst College; Miss M. Harwood, director of Maria Mitchell Observatory; Captain J. F. Hellweg, superintendent of Naval Observatory; Professor F. C. Jordan, director of Allegheny Observatory; Dr. P. van de Kamp,