tween ship and launch. Specimens will be sought of large game fishes such as marlin, and attempts will be made to study their life history.

Many of the islands and cays to be visited have been incompletely explored biologically. Some of them are known to be inhabited by species and sub-species of birds and reptiles different from those of the adjacent mainland, and it is hoped that the expedition may be able to contribute to the further knowledge of an area which is of special interest to science.

SOIL CONSERVATION

DR. W. C. LOWDERMILK, assistant chief of the Soil Conservation Service, has recently returned from an extended survey of the experience of older countries in the use of land as it relates to soil erosion, soil and water conservation and torrential flood control. His studies took him into Europe, including Great Britain, Holland, France, Italy, Algeria, Tunisia, Lybia, Egypt, Palestine, Trans-Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon. The war interrupted the course of the survey, which was to have continued through Turkey, Bulgaria, southern Germany and Switzerland and return.

The survey was made in overland travel by auto, including nearly 27,000 miles. It included conferences with more than 120 scientists, agriculturists and government officials, the examination and study of 124 areas of special interest, the collection of soil samples, particularly profiles dated by archeological evidence and the taking of some 3,500 illustrative photographs. Of special interest to American agriculture are evidences of an advanced degree of refinement in measures to control and conserve storm waters and to control erosion of a productive agriculture during the Roman epoch 2,000 years ago in Northern Africa and in ancient Syria. After the destruction of the Roman civilization and the traditions of agriculture by conquering nomad peoples, former measures of water and erosion control fell into disuse and were broken down. Soil erosion then began its damaging work and throughout this area has generally washed off soils from the slopes, sorting erosional débris and carrying the finer fractions out to the sea and spreading the coarser fractions over old alluvium on the valley floors. Increased torrential run-off from the bared slopes produces torrential streams, and is cutting gullies through the alluvium of the valley floors. This in short is the predominant process at work in the old lands south and east of the Mediterranean Sea, except in the broad alluvial plains of the Nile and Mesopotamia. Agricultural possibilities of to-day are restricted principally to the alluvium of lodged soils in the valley floors and outwash plains and in the improved management of vast grazing areas, where drought and famine have been the chief controls. It is possible to reforest the hill and mountain lands in Algeria, in Palestine and Syria, particularly where the country rock is limestone and to restore or to improve the productivity and prosperity of these wasted areas.

THE MINNEAPOLIS MEETING OF THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA AND ASSOCIATED SOCIETIES

THE Geological Society of America is meeting this week in Minneapolis. Many sections of the United States and Canada are represented, and the attendance was expected to reach five hundred. The principal universities, colleges, state and federal geological surveys of Canada and the United States planned to send delegates. Three associated societies—the Paleontological Society, the Mineralogical Society and the Society of Economic Geologists are meeting in conjunction with the Geological Society.

According to the preliminary program Dr. T. Wayland Vaughan, of Washington, D. C., president of the Geological Society, gave the address of the president on Thursday, December 28. His subject was "The Ecology of Modern Marine Organisms with Reference to Paleogeography." Earlier on Thursday Professor R. W. Chaney, of the University of California at Berkeley, retiring president of the Paleontological Society, addressed the several societies on "Tertiary Forests and Continental History." The title of the address of Professor E. S. Moore, of the University of Toronto, retiring president of the Society of Economic Geologists, was "Genetic Relations of Gold Deposits and Igneous Rocks in the Canadian Shield."

A general meeting of the four societies was held on Thursday morning. In the afternoon the sessions of the Geological Society were devoted to a discussion of structural geology; of the Paleontological Society to a discussion of new fossils; and of the Mineralogical Society to a discussion of crystal structure and textures. Papers read before the Economic Geologists were concerned with ground water supply and other applications of geology to the field of non-metallic resources. The technical sessions of the different societies were continued on Friday. On that day, in addition to the general session of the Geological Society, two joint sessions were held, one with the Paleontologists and one with the Mineralogists and Economic Geologists. Technical sessions were planned for Saturday morning, after which the meeting will close with an open house and tea at the Pillsbury Hall of the University of Minnesota.

OFFICERS OF THE AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY

DR. WILLIAM LLOYD EVANS, head of the department of chemistry of the Ohio State University, has been elected president of the American Chemical Society for 1941. He will take office as president-elect on January