tions and the highest competence for the task, but it has no need to wait for ideas to reach it from outside. The committee itself is a kind of scientific power house from which great things may be expected.—*The London Times.*

THE FUTURE OF POLISH SCIENCE

SINCE the restoration of Poland after the War of 1914–18 concentrated efforts have been made to develop and coordinate the scientific work of the country. During a difficult period of reconstruction, great progress was achieved and, in addition to the six universities, a number of other centers were available for learning and research. Before the outbreak of the present war, there were approximately 850 professors, 520 assistant professors and 1,600 research assistants and readers; the number of students being about 48,000. With the overrunning of Poland by Germany and the U.S.S.R., systematic and thorough methods have been employed to destroy its scientific life. This is being achieved in German-occupied Poland by the imprisonment of university staffs and scholars, the commandeering of specimens and equipment for use in the German Reich, the destruction of publications and libraries, and the closing of all centers of learning and higher education. Similar conditions exist in Soviet-occupied territory. Professors and research students have no means of continuing their work and the future of Polish science has been further jeopardized by the closing of secondary schools, thus destroying the source of future students. Fortunately, however, some forty-six Polish scientific workers have been able to reach England. They comprise among their subjects, anatomy, zoology, bacteriology, chemistry, physics and branches of engineering and mechanics; the majority can speak at least three languages. It is the Polish Government's earnest endeavor to conserve, through these men, the future of science in Poland. A few will be able to obtain British Council scholarships and will be placed by the council in British research institutions. The remainder will be given partial assistance from the very modest funds possessed for this purpose by the Polish Government.

The difficulties confronting the research workers who have no personal contacts in Great Britain are very great, not least among them the understandable antipathy and mistrust of foreigners which now exists in the country. The importance of securing the future of science and learning in Poland, however, will be fully realized, and by assisting to bring about the admission of Polish workers to research institutions in the British Commonwealth of Nations, British men of science can thus help to ensure a nucleus of Polish intellectuals. Also it must not be forgotten that Poland is an ally of Great Britain, who has at no time and in no way failed her, and that a common bond of hardship has drawn the two countries together in friendship.—*Nature.*

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM (NATURAL HISTORY)

THE war has been going on for more than a year, but the British Museum continues to publish valuable works on various aspects of natural history. These publications, at least in the main, represent work done prior to the beginning of the war, but it is the policy to continue scientific work as circumstances permit, work which will have a permanent value when the war is only a matter of history. In the same spirit, the British journal *Nature* frequently reviews German scientific books, accepting them according to their merits, regardless of the conflict between the countries. The books and papers listed below are those which I have just received from the office of SCIENCE.

Karl Fiedler. Monograph of the South American Weevils of the Genus Conotrachelus. February, 1940. 365 pp., many illustrations. Dr. Fiedler, Sanitätsrat in Thuringia, had been studying the South American weevils for a number of years, and a few years ago was invited to revise and describe the material of this large genus which had accumulated in the British Museum. He found in the collection no less than 216 new species, and included in his study about 200 new species obtained from other sources. The complete list, including those previously described, includes about six hundred species. Many of these are important pests of cultivated plants, but for the majority the habits and life history are unknown. The large and well-drawn figures greatly facilitate determination. This excellent book, by a citizen of an enemy country, is published in German. It is remarked in the preface that it would be a heavy expense to translate it into English, and mistakes might be made in the process.

W. H. Evans. A Catalogue of the African Hesperiidae, indicating the classification and nomenclature adopted in the British Museum, 1937. 212 pp., 29 plates. Brigadier Evans, well known for his studies of the Oriental skipper butterflies, undertook to revise those of the African fauna, represented in the Museum by nearly 25,000 specimens, belonging to 70 genera, 421 species and 157 subspecies. The descriptions are very brief, but there are good colored figures of the new species, and of others which had