ties, and new salary. The Director was made entirely independent of the Principal Librarian, except in financial matters. Financial independence was offered him, but declined. This meant that the Trustees had accepted the recommendations of the Duke of Devonshire's Commission so far as concerned the independence of the Museum. In 1898, on Sir W. Flower's retirement, it became known that the Trustees had in contemplation the revocation of the position of comparative independence assigned in 1885 to the Director of the Natural History Museum. Accordingly, a memorial was presented to the Trustees stating that, in the opinion of the memorialists, it was "of great importance to the welfare of Natural History that the principal officer in charge of the national collections relating to the subject should not be subordinate in authority to any other officer of the Museum." This memorial was published in the *Times* on July 9, 1898, and on the following day a letter appeared from the Principal Librarian stating that the petitioners had been misinformed, and that no change in the status of the Director was in contemplation. In spite of that public statement the fears of the memorialists were realised, for either in July or August of that year the position of comparative independence assigned to the Director of the Natural History Museum in 1885 was revoked, and the new Director who was appointed shortly after found himself—quite unexpectedly in view of the letter just referred to—in a position very different from that of his predecessor. In September, 1907, a memorial praying that advantage might be taken of the approaching vacancy in the Directorship to hold an inquiry into the administration of the Museum was sent to the Prime Minister, who in July, 1908, received a deputation on the same subject. As nothing resulted from this last effort, a letter was addressed to the *Times* on April 19 of this year calling the attention of the public to the matter. So much for the suggestion that the agitation on this matter has been a Press agitation.

I must now pass to consider the suggestion contained in the words "supported by *some* well-known men of science." The memorial of 1866 was signed by G. Bentham, W. B. Carpenter, W. S. Dallas, Charles Darwin, F. D. Godman, Joseph Hooker, T. H. Huxley, John Kirk, Lord Lilford, A. Newton, W. K. Porter, O. Salvin, P. L. Sclater, S. J. A. Salter, H. B. Tristram, A. R. Wallace and others. The Report of the Royal Commission was signed by the Duke of Devonshire, Sir J. Lubbock, Sir J. P. Kay-Shuttleworth, Dr. Sharpey, T. H. Huxley, G. G. Stokes, Prof. Henry Smith, Mr. B. Samuelson, Sir Norman Lockyer being Secretary. The memorial of the Council of the British Association was signed by W. Spottiswoode, Douglas Galton, P. L. Sclater, on behalf of the Council. The memorial to the Trustees in 1898 was signed by Lord Kelvin, G. G. Stokes, M. Foster, A. Rücker, John Murray, Francis Galton, Henry Thompson, W. Turner, Benjamin Baker, A. R. Wallace, W. F. R. Weldon, amongst others—I have not access to a complete list. The memorial of 1907 was signed by all the Professors of Zoology in the United Kingdom except two, and was supported by all of them. The deputation to the Prime Minister of 1908 consisted of some of these Professors, supported by Mr. Francis Darwin and Dr. Marr. From these lists it is clear that, although it would not be correct to say that this long-continued agitation has received the support of all well-known men of science, yet it would have been nearer the truth if Sir Archibald Geikie had used the word *most* instead of *some* in referring to the support it has received, for the cream of certainly two, and perhaps three, generations of English men of science have taken part in the agitation. Having thus shown that Sir A. Geikie has been inaccurate, not to say loose, in two of his statements of fact, what weight can be attached to any opinion that he formulates in his letter on the subject under discussion? He says that the result of his inquiry has been to convince him "that the agitation has no substantial justification, but has arisen from misapprehension and ignorance," and he goes on to reprove those who have taken part in it in these words:—"If the actual state of the matter had been realised no agitation ought ever to have been started." This is Sir Archibald Geikie's opinion. Let us try to realise for a

moment what an extraordinary state of mind it reveals! What a contempt for his colleagues, some of them among the greatest naturalists of the world's history, not to mention great names in other branches of science, some of whom had made a special and prolonged inquiry as members of a Royal Commission specially deputed to deal with this matter, and were masters of administrative methods! His contempt for the knowledge and judgment of his most distinguished scientific contemporaries is so colossal that it almost touches the infinite. But I need not labour this point, nor need I refer to his estimate of the knowledge of those of his zoological colleagues now living, all of whom by their avocations have a special interest in the Museum.

We now come to the last and most important point of all. Sir Archibald says that "the allegation so constantly made, that the Director of the Natural History Museum is under much more than merely nominal control of the Director and Principal Librarian at Bloomsbury is without any real foundation." This, of course, is his opinion on the question which has always been at issue. We, that is my colleagues and myself, traverse it absolutely. Can it be supposed that all the distinguished men in the past whom I have mentioned, and all the biologists now living who have paid special attention to the matter, have undergone the labour and expenditure of time and money which this prolonged agitation has involved without convincing themselves of the reality of this basal element in the question? It is true they may be wrong and Sir Archibald right, but what, I ask all unprejudiced men, are the probabilities? It may be said in reply, "Yes, but what are your reasons for holding this view? You must at least state them." A most reasonable request, with which we are only too anxious to comply if the opportunity is given us. Unsupported statements are worth little, and may easily be turned into personal attacks and lead to useless and hurtful recriminations. An inquiry must be held before a proper tribunal which can receive and sift evidence on this question so important to biological science in England.

At the end of his letter Sir Archibald Geikie draws a red herring across the scent by referring to a matter which, however deeply we may feel it, we have always avoided. It is not the question at issue. That question existed long before the recent circumstances to which he refers arose, and will, unless dealt with, continue long after they are forgotten.

ADAM SEDGWICK.

Imperial College of Science and Technology,
December 20.

I am sure that everyone connected with natural history or with the Royal Society recognises the amiable tactfulness and discretion of our worthy President. These qualities explain the opinion which he has expressed in reply to an inquiry from the Speaker as to the government of the Natural History Museum. They do not, however, give any weight to it. The essential qualification for expressing an opinion of value on this subject is a knowledge of the facts. Of that, I am sorry to be obliged to say, Sir Archibald Geikie is entirely innocent. The Speaker says in his letter that he understands that Sir Archibald Geikie "has recently made special inquiries on this subject." Sir Archibald himself says he has "had occasion to make a careful investigation of the facts of the case."

Sir Archibald, though he has recently become a Trustee of the British Museum, has not become one of the inner circle of the standing committee. No doubt he supposes that he has acquired some knowledge of the "facts of the case." He has been permitted to see the Red Book of Regulations! But he does not duly estimate the secrecy with which the business of the Trustees is conducted by the standing committee. He knows so little of the matter that he is unaware of his own ignorance. There are only three people who really know the facts as to the proceedings of the Trustees of the British Museum in regard to the Natural History Departments during the last twelve years. The Trustees themselves, even those of the inner circle, do not understand what has been done in their name. Sir Archibald Geikie has not sought information from any one of the three persons who could (were they willing) give it. The individual who really knows every

detail as to the actual government of the Natural History Museum by the Trustees of the British Museum during the last twelve years—whether good or bad in their tendency and result—is the late Director of the Natural History Departments. He is in frequent personal relations with Sir Archibald Geikie, but has never been consulted or questioned in any way whatever by that gentleman during his “careful investigation” of the utility or inutility of the present relations of the Trustees of the British Museum to the Natural History Museum.

I am able to state, categorically, that Sir Archibald's opinion is not based upon a knowledge of the facts, and that he has not (for reasons perhaps known to the Speaker and to himself, but not to me) taken the obvious means of ascertaining the facts—since I am the late Director in question. I have always maintained very friendly relations with Sir Archibald and should have been quite willing to assist him in his inquiry. He has not, however, approached me on the subject, and has not received either from me or from others authorised by me any statement on the matter. It will, I think, be obvious to your readers that no one, not even a member of the committee itself, which varies in consequence of absences, replacements by death, inattention, and incapacity to understand the matters discussed, can have such a knowledge of the acts and tendency of the body in question as the official (in this case the Director of the Natural History Departments) who during many successive years attended every meeting (held once a month) as secretary, prepared their agenda, took the minutes of their proceedings, and conducted their correspondence. He necessarily endeavoured to obtain their support for certain lines of policy, and knows, as he alone can know, what they accepted, what they rejected, and the motives and influences at work in determining their assent and their dissent. He cannot make a full statement of his knowledge on these matters except under very special authority and guarantee of immunity. For this he asks.

E. RAY LANKESTER.

Hôtel Ritz, Paris, December 16.

NOTES.

WE regret to announce the death, at eighty-two years of age, of M. Bouquet de la Grye, member of the Paris Academy of Sciences, and distinguished by his work in astronomy and hydrographic engineering.

THE death is announced, in his seventy-fourth year, of Prof. L. Lortet, honorary dean of the medical faculty in the University of Lyons and director of the Natural History Museum in that city. Prof. Lortet was the author of a number of original works, and also of translations of works by Prof. Tyndall and other British scientific writers.

THE juvenile lectures at the Royal Society of Arts will be delivered by Prof. Harold B. Dixon, F.R.S., on January 5 and 12, his subject being the chemistry of flame. The subject is one that lends itself to experiments, and the nature of flame, the properties of oxygen, the nature of various combinations of air and gas, will all be fully illustrated and explained.

THE Paris correspondent of the *Times* announces the death of Dr. L. Malassez, assistant director of the École des Hautes Études, and president of the French Biological Society, in his sixty-eighth year. Dr. Malassez was distinguished by his numerous works on normal and pathological histology and his research work on questions relating to blood tuberculosis and the genesis and nature of tumours.

By the assassination, on December 22, of Mr. A. M. T. Jackson, Collector of Násik, the Bombay Civil Service has lost one of its most learned members. Educated at Winchester and Brasenose College, Oxford, where he gained the Boden Sanskrit scholarship, he commenced his Indian service in 1888. He was the contributor of many papers on subjects connected with the religion, history, and ethno-

logy of western India, and he collaborated with the late Sir James Campbell in the valuable series of volumes constituting the “Bombay Gazetteer.” It was mainly owing to his researches published in the *Indian Antiquary*, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, and articles in the “Bombay Gazetteer” that the origin of the Rájpút tribes from the Scythian and Hun invaders was established. His untimely death removes one of the most eminent scholars in the ranks of the Indian Civil Service.

THE Research Defence Society desires to direct the attention of all Parliamentary candidates to its work. The society was founded in January, 1908, to make generally known the facts as to experiments on animals in this country, and the regulations under which they are conducted; the immense importance of such experiments to the welfare of mankind; and the great saving of human life and health which is already due to them. It is hoped that all candidates for Parliament, who may desire to acquaint themselves with these facts, will communicate with the hon. secretary, Research Defence Society, 70 Harley Street, W.

THE following appointments have been made at the National Physical Laboratory:—Dr. G. W. C. Kaye has been appointed an assistant in the metrology division. Dr. Kaye holds the degree of D.Sc. of London University, the B.A. research degree of Cambridge, and is an associate of the Royal College of Science and an associate member of the Institution of Electrical Engineers. He was formerly demonstrator in physics at the Royal College of Science, and a sub-lector in physics at Trinity College, Cambridge. Mr. Harris Booth has been appointed a junior assistant in the aéronautics division. Mr. Booth took the degree of B.A. at Cambridge, obtaining honours in mathematics and mechanical sciences. Mr. J. H. Hyde has been appointed a junior assistant in the aéronautics division. Mr. Hyde obtained in 1907 a Whitworth exhibition for engineering, and has had five years' experience at the works of the Great Eastern Railway Company.

SIR HENRY TRUEMAN WOOD, the secretary of the society, has edited a “Directory of the Royal Society of Arts,” which has been published by Messrs. George Bell and Sons at the price of 2s. The pamphlet, which runs to seventy-six pages, contains a short sketch of the society's history, an account of the trust and prize funds which it administers, a history of the examinations which it has carried on for the past fifty years, a description and pictures of its medals, lists of the Albert medallists and of past and present officials, the charter and by-laws, and other general information, including a list of the proceedings of the past session, and a financial statement for the past year. The pamphlet provides abundant evidence of the honourable part taken by the Royal Society of Arts in the improvement and development of the scientific and technical education of the country. The work of the society is, and has been, at once scientific, technical, industrial, commercial, and artistic. For many years—for it must be remembered the society was founded in 1754—it alone filled the place which is now occupied by the numerous modern scientific and technical associations, the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries alone being in existence when the society was inaugurated. It was the Society of Arts that first directed public attention to the national need for technical education, and by its efforts aroused the public feeling which led to the appointment of the Royal Commission of 1881. The whole of the society's work has been carried on without Government aid, or, indeed, without any endowment. It is practically