

the third is to bring the patients to as high a state of physical health as possible through the agency of dispensaries, hospitals, sanatoria, open-air schools, and the like. Whilst all this is going on, however, the laboratory investigator is to be encouraged to contribute to that stock of knowledge on which most of the administrative preventive and curative methods of dealing with tuberculosis are based. The public health authority, both central and local, the tuberculosis expert, the general medical practitioner, the voluntary anti-tuberculosis organisation, and the laboratory worker are brought together in the scheme of the committee; funds are provided—whether in sufficient amount still remains to be seen, but they are a good beginning—and the scheme starts under the most favourable auspices. That an enormous amount of good will be effected no one can doubt; that a whole-hearted attempt is being made to get the best of the scheme is equally certain; and should modifications or alterations have to be made in the future, it will be only as more light is thrown upon, and a better view obtained of, a very difficult and complicated question.

SARDINES IN SCIENCE AND COMMERCE.

IT has been suggested to us by a correspondent that the publication of the full text of Alderman Sir George Woodman's judgment in the recent "sardine" case, referred to in NATURE of April 25 (p. 194), would be of interest. In our article Sir George was incorrectly stated to have said that the industry of packing the immature pilchard in tins was started in 1882; this date, as will be seen from the subjoined report with which he has kindly favoured us, should have been 1822.

"My decision is that the term 'sardine' is of French origin. It is the French name for the pilchard, the fish scientifically known as *Clupea pilchardus*. The industry of packing the immature pilchard in tins was started in France in 1822, and the fish so packed and imported into this country were universally known as 'sardines.' The word 'sardine' has now become Anglicised, and I hold that the meaning of the term is 'the immature pilchard prepared and packed in oil in tins.'

"This is not what the defendant sold. The 'Skipper sardines' sold by him were the Norwegian fish known as the 'brisling.' The 'brisling' is the *Clupea sprattus* of the same family but of a different species from the *Clupea pilchardus*, and is the same fish, allowing for differences caused by local environment, as the English sprat. There was a false trade description.

"The defendant has not proved that, prior to the passing of the Merchandise Marks Act, 1887, the description 'sardine' was generally applied to any small suitable fish prepared and packed in oil in tins, but I am satisfied that for the last twenty years at least the use of the term 'sardines' has been extended in commerce, especially amongst retail traders, to include any such small fish so packed and prepared. To the defendant, who started his own business in 1903, and was selling Norwegian sardines twenty years ago, the word had this extended meaning. He also knew that the Norwegian Government had

formally adopted the word 'sardines' to describe the brisling packed in oil. He, in my opinion, believed that the description he applied was a true description, and, notwithstanding the very able legal arguments I have just listened to from Mr. Bodkin, I hold that he has proved that he acted innocently within the meaning of Section 2, Subsection 2 (c) of the Merchandise Marks Act of 1887. I therefore dismiss the summons."

We should like to have similar legal pronouncements upon several other commodities which are sold under misleading trade descriptions. For instance, the names under which furs are sold in shops often conceal from the public the nature of the animals from which the furs have been obtained. It is regarded as permissible by dealers and tradesmen to describe the fur of white rabbit, dyed, as "chinchilla coney," Australian opossum as "Adelaide chinchilla," American opossum as "Russian marten," and Belgian hare as "Baltic lynx." Such designations seem to us to be just as misleading as describing sprats as sardines when they are packed in oil. Again, quarry-owners and contractors for road-metal claim that any stone used for this purpose may be described as "granite," with the result that limestones or other inferior rocks for road-making are purchased by local highway authorities under the impression that they are obtaining true granite. We make no claim to impose specific scientific terms upon the common vocabulary or the labels of commerce, but we are sure that the trade custom of describing one thing as another of a superior class cannot be justified by any satisfactory standards of precision or ethics.

THE ROYAL SOCIETY CONVERSAZIONE.

THE first of this year's conversazioni of the Royal Society was held at Burlington House on May 8, and was, as usual, largely attended. Many objects and experiments relating to recent work in science were on view, and in the course of the evening short demonstration lectures were given by Mr. C. V. Boys on soap bubbles, the Hon. R. J. Strutt on active nitrogen, particularly as to the striking effects of pressure and temperature on active nitrogen, and Dr. J. S. Haldane on mountain sickness and acclimatisation to high altitudes.

We are unable to find space for a list of the numerous exhibits, but we extract from the official catalogue a few descriptions of some of the chief objects of interest.

ANTHROPOLOGY.—*Mr. W. Dale*: Palæolithic flint implements from the gravel beds of the River Test at Dunbridge, Hants, at about 100 to 150 ft. above Ordnance datum. The implements are diverse in form and in the character of their patination. A marked feature is the presence of pointed forms quite unwater-worn, which have acquired the white colour of the upper part of the gravel. These are taken as dating the gravel, and assigned to the St. Acheul period. The largest and most pointed is even considered to belong to a later and transitional period. In the same gravels are found older and water-