

industries. Insect pests of various kinds and means of destroying them were dealt with in a series of papers by Mr. C. W. Mally, and Dr. P. A. van der Byl contributed a valuable monograph on a fungus which attacks the Black Ironwood tree.

Mention must not be omitted of Prof. H. B. Fantham's excellent account of the intestinal and blood organisms which the war operations in Salonika and Gallipoli had afforded special opportunities for studying.

Section D was largely taken up with educational questions. Agricultural education in South Africa was dealt with by Dr. A. I. Perold, recently principal of the Government Agricultural School at Elsenburg and now professor of oenology at Victoria College, while by way of comparison Dr. C. F. Juritz read a paper on agricultural education in Australia. Entomological education in the United States was the subject of a paper by Dr. E. S. Cogan. Mr. W. J. Horne discussed the movement towards a national system of technical education, and the Rev. Prof. J. I. Marais completed the symposium with a paper on some forgotten factors in education. Section D, too, discussed the dearth of paper-making materials, an account being given by Dr. Juritz of the grasses of the eastern coast belt of the sub-continent available for paper-making: these grasses were mainly species of *Andropogon*, *Erianthus*, and *Anthistria*.

The results of mental tests applied to Zulu students at a mission station in Natal were discussed by Mr. S. G. Rich before Section E. The author urged continuance of the investigation with the view of settling the question whether the native mind ceases growth at puberty. Dr. C. T. Loram at a later stage contributed a paper dealing with the same question, which he answered in the negative, ascribing appearances to the contrary to the courses of study and methods of teaching adopted in native schools. He reiterated suggestions made at the Maritzburg meeting a year ago by the Rev. J. R. L. Kingon that part at least of the course of study should be conducted in the Kaffir vernacular. The Rev. W. A. Norton read some important papers before Section E: in one of these he urged the need and value of an academic study of native philology and ethnology, and in another he emphasised the advantages of stenography as an aid to the phonetic analysis and comparison of the Bantu languages. A very interesting paper on native ideas of cosmology was contributed by the Rev. S. S. Dornan, and equally interesting was one read by Mr. J. McLaren, who illustrated the wisdom and the wit of the Bantu people by numerous quotations of their proverbial sayings.

Prof. Orr, at the conclusion of his presidential address on the opening evening of the session, presented the South Africa medal and an award of 50*l.* to Prof. J. D. F. Gilchrist, professor of zoology at the South African College, in recognition of his researches in marine biology. There were two evening discourses of the usual popu-

lar type during the week, one by Prof. Gilchrist on the marine animals of South Africa, and the other by Mr. H. E. Wood, of the Union Observatory, on "Some Unsolved Problems of Astronomy."

Next year's meeting will be held at Johannesburg, with Dr. C. F. Juritz as president.

#### THE PHYSIQUE OF RECRUITS.

IN the summer of 1916 the Board of Scientific Studies was established under the ægis of the Royal Society to serve as a means of placing knowledge in the possession of scientific and technical societies at the disposal of Government departments. At the first general meeting of this board in July, 1916, the urgency of a physical survey of the nation, to discover whether or not there existed definite evidence of physical deterioration, was discussed. Emphasis was laid by various speakers on the fact that an Interdepartmental Committee had reported in 1904 that such a survey was necessary. Nothing, however, had been done. The mobilisation of a national Army had provided an opportunity, as well as a need, for such a survey.

The Board of Scientific Studies requested the Royal Anthropological Institute to report on the desirability and possibility of such a survey. The institute having reported that such a survey was both desirable and possible, the board formed an Anthropological Survey Sub-Committee to consider the manner in which such an investigation could best be carried out. This sub-committee has not yet reported to the Board of Scientific Studies, but we understand that it is seeking for the means of carrying out such a survey through the Government departments which have directly to do with the health and physique of the nation: the Recruiting Authority—now the Ministry of National Service—the Local Government Board, and the Board of Education. Representatives of these departments have joined the Anthropological Survey Sub-Committee, and it is hoped that a practical scheme may be formulated at an early date.

Meanwhile American anthropologists have stolen a march on their British colleagues. When the United States entered the war the National Research Council was at once created to serve the same purpose as our Board of Scientific Studies. Its Anthropological Committee, formed to advise in the selection, standardisation, and examination of recruits, has already issued its report and recommendations. It proposes that six of the sixteen great concentration camps should be selected for an anthropological survey—two in the Eastern, two in the Middle, and two in the Western States—and that special men, who had been trained to use exactly the same anthropometrical methods at the National Museum at Washington, should be dispatched to carry out a survey of the men in the selected camps. The points for investigation have been reduced to a minimum, namely, standing and sitting heights, three dimensions of the head, two

of the face, two of the chest, with precise records of the colour of skin, eyes, and hair. The statistical staff of the Prudential Insurance Company of America has undertaken to deal with the data collected, while the Smithsonian Institution will facilitate the publication of results.

Although the intentions of the British committee are more wide-reaching and aim at ascertaining the condition of all elements in the population, it is to be hoped that the observations taken in Britain and America will be capable of direct comparison—for, beyond doubt, the bulk of the population of the United States has a British ancestry.

#### PROF. CHARLES LATHAM.

BY the sudden death of Prof. Charles Latham on September 27, the University of Glasgow has lost an eminent member of its teaching staff in the department of applied science. In 1902 the late Dr. James S. Dixon, an eminent coalmaster of Glasgow, "recognising the want of a means of teaching the higher branches of the theory and practice of mining in the University, and the desire for acquiring such knowledge displayed by many young men connected with mining," gave the University 10,000*l.* for the foundation of a lectureship in the subject. In the various branches of engineering, and in naval architecture, curricula were already provided which prepared for the degree of B.Sc. in applied science. Mining was added as an alternative curriculum, and the new department was entrusted to Mr. Latham. He had been trained in the Wigan School of Mines, and had been assistant general manager of the Moss Hall Coal Co. For nine years (1893–1902) he was director of mining at University College, Nottingham. The first Dixon lecturer speedily made his department efficient, and his numerous courses of instruction attracted many pupils.

In 1907 Dr. Dixon supplemented his original endowment by 6500*l.*, and the University, with the consent of the Privy Council, transformed the lectureship into a chair. To this Mr. Latham was forthwith appointed, the electors including H.M. Inspectors of Mining and the presidents of the Scottish Mining Institute and the Coalmasters' Association. In the new chair Prof. Latham continued to devote himself to the advancement of his subject by teaching and research. He raised a considerable Equipment Fund, by means of generous contributions from the leaders of the Scottish mining industries, who had great confidence in his policy and character. Assisted by the fund, the University was enabled to equip the museum and laboratory of the department with valuable exhibits and apparatus, and Prof. Latham gave himself to the training of his pupils and assistants in the practical and experimental sides of their work, and in original investigations on mine-pumps, winding machinery, coal-cutting, inflammable gases, life-saving appliances, etc. His course was recognised by the Home Office as equivalent to two of the five years' practical training required under the Coal Mines Acts for the

qualification of mine manager. By arrangement with a number of the largest collieries in Scotland, his students were enabled, during the summer months of each year of the course, to acquire experience of mining practice. Many of them now occupy responsible positions in the industry, and in technical institutions throughout the country. Prof. Latham served on numerous advisory and other committees relating to mining, and published, in the Transactions of the Mining Institute and elsewhere, memoirs of importance on his researches in the above-mentioned subjects.

#### NOTES.

THE Minister of Reconstruction has appointed a committee to advise him as to the procedure which should be adopted for dealing with the position of the chemical trades after the war. The committee consists of the following members:—Sir Keith W. Price (chairman), Mr. J. Anderson, Mr. J. F. Brunner, Dr. C. Carpenter, Prof. J. G. Lawn, Sir William Pearce, Mr. K. B. Quinan, and the Right Hon. J. W. Wilson. Mr. G. C. Smallwood, Ministry of Munitions, will act as secretary to the committee. The officers of Government departments are appointed with the concurrence of their respective Ministers, and the other members of the committee have been appointed at the suggestion of a representative meeting of chemical manufacturers. Dr. Addison has requested the committee to conduct its deliberations with a view to the creation of some organisation which should be adequately representative of the trade as a whole, and by means of which the trade may be enabled hereafter to continue to develop its own resources and to enlist the closest co-operation of all those engaged in the chemical industry.

ON October 6 Prof. W. J. Pope addressed a meeting of teachers at Regent Street Polytechnic on the neglect of expert knowledge of scientific subjects by the British Government. Germany, he is reported by the *Times* to have said, prepared for war by the establishment of a huge chemical industry, which was built up round the coal-tar industry, and then by exporting a large proportion of the world's requirements of coal-tar colours and pharmaceutical and photographic products. This success was achieved in spite of the fact that England once possessed the whole of the heavy chemical industry of the world. We formerly produced practically all the nitric and sulphuric acids and the greater part of the alkali used throughout the world. This industry has been taken from us as the result of Germany's foresight and exploitation of scientific ability. The coal-tar industry was established originally in this country, and until ten years ago Germany was practically dependent on us for crude coal-tar and for the simpler first products separated from coal-tar. Alluding to the establishment of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research with an endowment of 1,000,000*l.*, Prof. Pope remarked that the question to be answered is why that experiment was not made twenty years ago, at a time when it would have been undoubtedly successful in preventing the horrors of the last three years. We have suffered in the past from the exclusively British method of making the specialist entirely subservient to the administrator, the administrator being generally chosen because he is available, because he is politically acceptable, and because he knows nothing whatever about the subject which is to be administered, and is therefore not likely to be prejudiced by any previous convictions. The process of appointing someone who knows nothing to super-