

### Protection of the Galapagos Fauna

THE giant tortoises and large iguanid lizards, which are a noteworthy feature of the fauna of the Galapagos Islands, have been greatly reduced in numbers during the last hundred and fifty years on account of their value as a source of oil, meat and leather. Many species are already extinct, and the numbers of others have passed below that minimum limit beyond which a species is unlikely to recover. Their commercial importance has now largely disappeared, but a new factor has arisen which menaces not only the larger reptiles but also the whole fauna. Pigs, dogs, cats and rats, introduced by settlers and visiting ships, are rapidly multiplying and preying heavily on the indigenous population. The danger has been apparent for many years, but it is only recently that a group of American zoologists, associated with the American Committee for International Wild Life Protection, has prevailed upon the Government of Ecuador to enact legislation to protect the fauna. The British Association has expressed to the Government of Ecuador its deep appreciation of the action taken, and has instructed its representative at the forthcoming International Zoological Congress (Dr. W. T. Calman) to direct attention to the matter. Unfortunately, the full scope of the Ecuadorian decree is not at present known in England, but it seems that permission has been given for many of the islands to be set aside as Nature reserves, and for the protection of the native reptiles, birds and aquatic mammals throughout the entire archipelago. No provision appears to have been made for the enforcement of the decree, but it is hoped that an international committee may be formed to co-operate with the Government of Ecuador to achieve this end; Sir Edward Poulton and Mr. H. W. Parker having been nominated by the British Association as its representatives.

### Science and Population Problems

SIR ARNOLD WILSON'S public lecture to members of the British Association and others delivered at Norwich on September 9, which dealt with "Science and Population Problems", was a striking illustration of the manner in which the Association may contribute to the discussion of current problems of public policy and government. On these occasions of general assembly of the members, a considered statement on broad lines reaches a wider audience than that to which it is immediately addressed, and in pointing out the bearing of the results of scientific research on the method of approach to a solution of difficulties of the day, it can help to mould public opinion on sane and enlightened lines. Thus, for example, Sir Arnold Wilson, although showing in the latter part of his address that he had in mind more particularly the practical measures dictated by scientific study for dealing with a stationary or falling population in Great Britain, indicated by his wide survey of the facts, so far as known, throughout the world, that population problems assume a different complexion when viewed as a whole. He restored the perspective, which has

been lost in recent discussion owing to post-War developments, by reminding his hearers that if in certain countries a stationary or falling population is a menace, a vast proportion of the world population—in the East alone, at least one third—is in immediate or prospective danger of under-nourishment or even starvation through pressure of population and economic stress. This fact, which was patent before the War and was emphasised time and again by the late Prof. J. W. Gregory, has been allowed to fall into the background in the discussion of more insistent social and economic sectional problems. Its implications are no less grave than they were, and call as urgently as ever for consideration—possibly along the line of the scientific study of the distribution of commodities.

### Further Exploration of Zimbabwe

NOTWITHSTANDING the general acceptance of the results of Miss Caton-Thompson's excavations in Rhodesia in 1929, a section of archaeological opinion in South Africa still adheres to the view that the Zimbabwe are more ancient than was then shown, and the work of a people other than of Bantu stock. It will be remembered that when Miss Caton-Thompson submitted her results to the British Association, on behalf of which her excavations had been carried out, at the South African meeting in that year, Prof. Raymond Dart contested her conclusions, arguing for both the greater antiquity of the ruins and their lack of similarity to anything known in indigenous Bantu culture. An alternative suggestion is that they are of pre-Bantu origin, possibly the work of an Hamitic people under Arabian direction. Further research by South African archaeologists, carried out after 1929, tends to confirm, rather than weaken, the view that structures of stone were not alien to early Bantu culture. Such, at least, is the origin attributed to ancient structures, which might, it is thought, have developed into the Zimbabwe, culminating in the unmortared granite towers and walls, thirty feet high and fifteen feet thick, of Great Zimbabwe. It is now reported from South Africa (*Observer*, September 6) that Prof. Dart, who has just returned to Johannesburg from Southern Rhodesia, proposes a further and more intensive exploration of Great Zimbabwe on a scale which will take five years for completion.

### Romano-Celtic Temple at Colchester

FURTHER excavation on the Romano-British site at Colchester has revealed more fully the character and purpose of the remarkable enclosure and contained building discovered at Sheepen Farm on the banks of the Colne. The course of the northern wall has now been followed up, and the entire enclosure traced. It is found to be approximately rectangular in plan, except that the north-east corner has been deflected a distance of 155 ft., thus reducing the eastern face of the enclosure to a length of 180 ft. The total perimeter of the enclosing wall is roughly 511 yards. Further details of the enclosed building, of which the purpose is now evident, are given in a

report which appears in *The Times* of September 3. A stepped stone plinth, five feet square, in the centre of which there still remains *in situ* the base of a column of Purbeck marble, 1 ft. 3 in. in diameter, has been found approximately in the centre and in contact with the eastern face of the outer wall of the temple. The steps on the southern face of the plinth still retain portions of the original plaster, and on one fragment of the latter there are faint traces of colour. It is suggested that the column and plinth may be the surviving evidence of an altar which once faced the entrance of the temple. Flanking the plinth to the north and south, at approximately 11 ft. from the north-east and south-east corners of the outer wall respectively, are remains of packed rubble foundations, on which may have stood plinths of a similar nature to that which has been discovered facing the main entrance. At present, owing to their mutilated condition, and until further examination has been made, any conclusion would be premature. The drastic manner in which the temple was destroyed ultimately is, it is pointed out, indicated by the fact that only in the south-east corner of the wall of the *cella* does any portion of the original construction remain.

#### Funds for Archæological Exploration in Britain

SIR FREDERIC KENYON, in his first presidential address to the Society of Antiquaries of London, which now appears in full in the *Antiquaries Journal*, 15, 3, stresses the difficulties which beset archæological excavation in Great Britain through the lack of men and money. Of the two, he feels constrained, and rightly, to lay greater emphasis on the latter. Few archæological excavations, he points out, are, like Verulamium, able to 'live on the country' and rely for any considerable proportion of their cost on a constant stream of visitors. Probably most excavators would regard such a solution of their difficulties as something of a calamity, in view of the constant interruption of their work. In the report of the Council, appearing concurrently with the presidential address, an appeal is made for support for the Society's Research Fund, which at present is not adequate to permit subvention of local funds by any amount which is more than an expression of goodwill. The Society is also faced for some time to come with responsibility for the excavation of Maiden Castle at Dorchester. Archæological exploration on any considerable scale is an especially expensive form of scientific research, and is usually beyond local resources. Sir Frederic suggests that the difficulties of the present situation might be met by the formation of a central fund, administered by such a body as the Society of Antiquaries through the machinery of the Congress of Archæological Societies. If this suggestion were adopted, it need not interfere with local interest, but should rather serve to stimulate it. It would also help to co-ordinate archæological research—a matter of no little moment; but not the least advantage it offers is that it would facilitate prompt action when, in these days of rapid development for building, it might be urgently necessary immediately to follow up some chance discovery.

#### International Congress of Pre- and Protohistoric Sciences

THE Second International Congress of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences, in accordance with the decision taken in 1932 when the first session was held in London, will take place at Oslo in 1936. The Congress will meet early in August. Invitations and a preliminary statement are now being issued by the organising committee in Norway. The president will be Prof. A. W. Brøgger; and Juhs Bøe, Sigurd Grieg and Prof. J. L. Myres will act as general secretaries. The subscription has been fixed at 25 kr. for members and 12 kr. for associates. Enrolments and subscriptions should be addressed to the Bureau of the Congress, Universitetets Oldsaksamling, Oslo. Those who wish to contribute to the proceedings are requested to inform their national representative on the Conseil Permanent before March 1, 1936, and to forward an abstract of their communication to the organising committee before May next. The representatives of Great Britain on the Conseil Permanent are Prof. J. L. Myres, Sir Charles Peers and Prof. V. Gordon Childe (University of Edinburgh), and Mr. C. E. P. Hawkes (British Museum, Bloomsbury, London, W.C.1), secretaries. The organising committee announces that communications dealing with the topics which have been selected for discussion, as mentioned below, will be especially welcomed.

ON broad lines the arrangement of the proceedings will follow that of the London congress, when the members met in five sections, dealing respectively with human palæontology and the evolution of prehistoric man, the stone and metal ages in the ancient world and as found elsewhere, and the transition from prehistoric to historic. Special attention will be given to the discussion of certain Scandinavian problems in relation to the prehistoric archæology of Europe and the ancient world at large. The topics proposed, which were approved by the Conseil Permanent at Berne in December last, are: the excavations on stone age sites in Finmark of the last ten years, rock engravings in Norway and elsewhere, the Iron Age farms of Norway, the history of Teutonic art forms in the fifth and sixth centuries, and the textiles of Oseberg. It is possible that the domestic animals of prehistoric times and the origin of the runic alphabet may also be included, but this question has yet to be decided. The organising committee is anxious that problems arising out of these subjects should be discussed as thoroughly as possible on broad lines.

#### Co-operative Buying

IT is now generally recognised in large-scale business that considerable economies can be obtained through the establishment of a central purchasing department, and in the Second Report of the Committee on the Standardisation and Simplification of the Requirements of Local Authorities (H.M. Stationery Office, 6d. net), a similar policy is urged on local authorities. The larger local authorities are recommended to co-ordinate the buying of their various departments while smaller authorities are advised to co-operate with other