

is a purpose which Lord Grey himself would have applauded, for he took much interest in the Museum, and was concerned about the upkeep of the many valuable and historically interesting collections which it contains. The Museum itself was built in 1884 to house the natural history collections of the Society, and with subsequent additions it has cost approximately £45,000. But the cost of upkeep and staffing is more than the Society can bear, even although the membership is now greater than at any time during the hundred and six years of the Society's existence. A sum of £1,000 has been promised anonymously if three other donors are each prepared to subscribe a similar amount, but it is to the generosity of the many lovers of Nature, and particularly those of the north of England, that Lord Armstrong and the Society look for the safeguarding of the Museum and its collections.

#### Explorations in Ellesmere Island

THE Oxford University Arctic Expedition of 1934-35 under Dr. N. Humphreys was forced to winter at Etah in north-western Greenland instead of on Ellesmere Island; but during the summer of this year they split up into small parties, each accompanied by Eskimo, and explored various parts of the north and centre of Ellesmere Island. Three articles on their work have appeared recently in *The Times*. An attempt to cross the Grinnell Land ice-sheet failed, but a crossing was made to the south by the narrow isthmus between Flager and Bay fjords, thus linking up with Isachsen's former work on the west coast. A more important journey was made in Grant Land from Fort Conger, Greely's camp of half a century ago, via Lake Hazen to the lofty United States Range. From a summit of 9,000 ft. there was a good view clear to the north. The country seems to be entirely mountainous and difficult to cross. The lofty ranges to the northward were named the British Empire range. They appear to flank the northern side of Ellesmere Island, and their relation to the Challenger Mountains farther west, discovered in 1876 by Aldrich, will be of interest when revealed. These mountains are probably related to the Caledonian foldings of northern Greenland. A third party carried out some surveys in Scoresby Bay, which hitherto had been inadequately examined. The expedition returned to England in October bringing large collections.

#### Organisation of the Coal Industry

SIR HAROLD HARTLEY, addressing the Institution of Chemical Engineers on October 20 on "Our Nation's Coal Resources", surveyed the changes which, during the last twenty-five years, have so profoundly affected the prosperity of the British coal industry. He pointed out the need which has been disclosed for the National Coal Survey undertaken by the Fuel Research Board, and stated that the value of the work of the Survey is becoming more obvious as it progresses. He advocates extending the Survey to examine the suitability of coals for the different industrial purposes, so as to discover where need for conservation exists. Fuel economy in utilisation and

other circumstances have reduced the production of coal; but methods of mining have made great progress, and both circumstances reduce the number of mine workers. Methods of transportation and distribution have not kept pace with the improvement with the methods of mining. Sir Harold condemned the widespread ownership of private waggons as a burden on cost of distribution and advocated a unification of interests at least up to the point at which coal is to be transferred to the consumer. A rational system of grading should replace trade practice of selling by description. Intensified research on the fundamental nature of coal was urged, and indeed the factors which seem to Sir Harold most promising are more research and better organisation. The latter may be unpalatable to some individualists, but seems to be inevitable.

#### The Press and the Post Office

IN the course of an address to the Post Office Telegraph and Telephone Society given at King George V Hall, St. Martin's le Grand, London, on November 18, by Mr. J. H. Brebner, press officer of the Post Office, it was emphasised that the development of the Press has been closely allied to the progress of the Post Office. The Post Office can claim a great share in the development of newspapers, for from its establishment, six postal officials entitled 'clerks of the roads' were the first newsagents in Great Britain, and were solely responsible for the distribution of newspapers to all parts of the United Kingdom. These 'clerks of the roads' derived some £8,000 a year from the sale of newspapers, £6,000 of which was used by the Post Office for the payment of pensions and increases of salaries to Post Office servants who were inadequately paid. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the private telegraph companies maintained a press bureau which supplied the newspapers with general news. The newspapers, however, desired to organise their own press agencies on the ground that they were the better judges of the news the public required. Since the telegraph companies would not give up their press bureau, the newspaper proprietors joined the growing agitation for the nationalisation of the telegraph system. The Electric Telegraphs Bill was passed in 1868, and the State accordingly acquired the telegraphs. A special 'News Division' was created at the Central Telegraph Office, London, and was maintained until 1930, when the extended use of the telephone by the Press, and the leased telegraph lines to press agencies and newspapers, rendered this section with its special press wires unnecessary. The Press has taken full advantage of each step in the progress of communications brought about by the Post Office, and the rapid development of the telephone service, since its acquisition by the State in 1912, has enabled the speedier transmission of news not only from all parts of Great Britain, but also to and from all parts of the world.

#### Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd.

MR. JUSTICE EVE has allowed the petition of Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd., to confirm a