

proceeding on the production of a simplified objective noise meter so as to facilitate its production in greater numbers. Detailed results of the tests, which were carried out by the National Physical Laboratory, are given in the report.

#### Recent Acquisitions at the Natural History Museum

THE Museum has received as a permanent loan from His Majesty the King a fine series of elephant tusks. The series comprises the record pair of Indian tusks, three pairs and a single large tusk of the African species, and an ornamented tusk of the Malayan elephant. The Indian tusks, which are figured in Rowland Ward's "Records of Big Game", are of exceptional size for Indian ivory, measuring 8 ft. 9 in. and 8 ft. 6½ in. in length and weighing 161 lb. and 160 lb. respectively. Good Indian tusks rarely exceed 6–7 ft. in length or weigh more than 80–100 lb. The Trustees of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, have handed over to the National collection the type specimens of fifteen races of British and Irish birds, described by the late Dr. E. Hartert and Mr. H. F. Witherby. These types formed part of the famous Rothschild collection which was purchased by the American Museum in 1932. Through the generosity of Mr. E. C. Stuart Baker, the Museum has received the largest collection of birds' eggs ever presented to the British Museum. This great collection consists of approximately 50,000 eggs belonging to some 1,960 different species of birds found in the Indian Empire. Very many of these eggs were not previously represented in the national collection and in a considerable number of cases Baker's specimens are the only ones known. A collection of more than 6,000 invertebrates, chiefly Brachiopoda and Trilobita, including 40 new species, as well as type and figured specimens, collected by Mr. B. B. Bancroft with great exactness as to horizon and locality, from the Ordovician of the Welsh Borderland and the Lake District, has been purchased for the Department of Geology. The Mineral Department has received from the Director of the Geological Survey of Nigeria as a donation a piece, besides several fragments, of the meteoric stone which fell near Udei station, Benue river, Nigeria, in 1927. The meteorite is of unusual interest because it belongs to the rare pallasite group of stony-irons containing olivine.

THE Department of Botany has received from Mr. C. J. Brooks his fern herbarium, containing about 2,650 specimens. Mr. Brooks was employed as a chemist in the gold-mining industry in Sarawak and later in Sumatra, where he collected insects and ferns. He discovered many new species in the mountains of Borneo and Sumatra, including Gunong Dempo. He also visited Celebes and Amboina. In the latter island he made a very complete collection and ascended the volcano Salahoetoe. Mr. Brooks's plants were mostly worked out by Capt. C. R. W. K. van Alderwerelt van Rosenburgh at Buitenzorg, and many are types or paratypes not otherwise represented in Europe. He was also in touch with Prof.

E. B. Copeland and the late Prince Roland Bonaparte, and obtained some specimens by exchange. Especially notable are a set of Schlechter's New Guinea ferns and some from Papua collected by the Rev. Copland King. His herbarium is the most valuable acquisition that the fern collections have had for many years, the more so as it comes from a region which was previously somewhat scantily represented. The Oxford University Exploration Club has presented the botanical collections made by Mr. H. G. Vevers on the recent expedition to Greenland. This comprises more than five hundred numbers. Dr. G. N. Humphreys of the Mount Everest (1936) Expedition has sent to the Museum a collection of 88 flowering plants which he made at the higher camps used by that Expedition. Considering the conditions under which Dr. Humphreys worked, the plants are very well collected and dried, and he appears to have obtained a good representation of the alpine flora. The Department has particularly fine collections from Nepal, and Dr. Humphreys' specimens will add further to the importance of this Himalayan material. A number of the species represented reach the altitudinal limit of flowering-plant vegetation, and it is particularly valuable to have the precise altitude at which each specimen was collected.

#### Colonial Territories and Economic Opportunity

THE Advisory Committee of the National Executive of the Labour Party has prepared a pamphlet on "The Demand for Colonial Territories and Equality of Economic Opportunity" in which the position of the three 'dissatisfied' Powers—Germany, Italy and Japan—is examined (Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1. 4d.). In analysing access to raw materials, the division of the world, recently adopted by the *Economist*, into the British Empire, the French Empire, the Dutch Empire, the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., and the rest of the world, is used. The general conclusion is reached that colonies are of some, but not of great, economic importance. Only in the case of rubber are the colonial possessions of a Great Power of dominant importance. It is held that the abolition of discrimination rather than the exchange of territories should be the objective. To this end, the Labour Party should advocate the bringing of Colonial possessions, such as those of Britain in Africa, under the mandates system—approximately of the present B Class of mandates. The pamphlet is full of information and deserves close study.

#### Teaching Electric Cookery in Switzerland

IN the *Electrical Age* of October, a magazine published by the Electrical Association for Women, an interesting summary is given of Swiss methods of teaching electrical cooking in schools. Swiss manufacturers supply special electric cookers for use in school kitchens. These are made to stand away from the wall so that access can be obtained from all sides. The oven is placed on one side instead of being put under the hot plates as in the ordinary domestic cooker. This facilitates access to it and at