

a source of information relating to the industries of neolithic man, Grime's Graves is without rival; while the circle of Arbor Low in Derbyshire, and the megalithic barrows of the Cotswolds each hold a place in British prehistory, of which the importance needs no emphasis. It may be noted, however, that the latter are counted the oldest monuments under the guardianship of the Office of Works. Verulamium, since Dr. Mortimer Wheeler's excavations, is unique both as a British and a Romano-British site. In historic periods the abbeys of Shropshire and the castles, such as Framlingham, stand out among mediæval buildings; while Kirby Hall, Northants, is one of the most important of the large country houses of Elizabethan and Jacobean times. For the first time, historic buildings belonging to the Crown appear. These are the Tower, Hampton Court, Kensington Palace, and the Chapter House of Westminster. Of the various periods into which English prehistory and history fall, the Saxon alone does not appear among the historic monuments under protection.

#### Ethnology of the Far East

THE authorities of the Raffles Museum, Singapore, have added a new series, to be known as Series B, to the Museum Bulletin. The present publication, which will now become Series A, hitherto has been devoted almost entirely to communications of a biological character. The new series will be anthropological, and for some time to come will be devoted largely to publication of the results of a scheme of research in the prehistory of the Malay Peninsula, for which the Carnegie Corporation of New York has voted a subvention extending over a period of three years. In the first issue of the new series are three reports on recent excavations—the first in Kedah by Mr. H. D. Collings, the second in a cave in Bukit Christamani by Mr. M. F. W. Tweedie, and the third on kitchen middens at Guak Kepoh, Wellesley Province, by Dr. P. V. van Stein Callenfels. The most important, as well as the longest, communication is from Dr. van Stein Callenfels, who, in "The Melanesian Civilization of Eastern Asia", contributes a detailed analysis of the Hoabinian stone age culture, so called from the early culture first distinguished in Tonkin, which he traces throughout the East so far as observed from China and Japan to Celebes, and analyses into three stages, in which he sees evidence for contacts between a people of a palæolithic type of culture with another in a protoneolithic stage. In incorporating the new evidence obtained under the present scheme in his analysis, and at the same time making use of the evidence afforded by earlier excavations in the Malay Peninsula, notwithstanding their defects in method, Dr. van Stein Callenfels also turns to the discussion of the position of Wadjak man, to whom he is inclined to assign a date later than the Pleistocene, but to regard him as a very old representative of the Melanesoid culture.

#### The Consumption of Statistics

IN his inaugural address on November 18 as president of the Royal Statistical Society, Lord Kennet urged the necessity for a more effective

consumption of statistics. He affirmed that statistics—in the broad sense of the collection and methodical arrangement of facts—provide the one indispensable food from which the organs of Government can derive the motive power for the right conduct of the business of governing the nation. Decisions made without adequate statistical study on questions of the magnitude and complexity with which modern Governments have to deal, are not in the least likely to be even approximately correct, and the resulting policies and measures would be little better than the medicine-man's sympathetic magic carried out by incantation. Without doubt, then, the Government ought to be the most substantial consumers of statistics. If the Government consumes statistics—and it undoubtedly does to some extent both consume and digest them—the results of Government action seem to show that the metabolism is defective. What part of the organism is at fault? Lord Kennet classified the effective organs of Government as the Press, the wireless, the Civil Service, the Cabinet, the House of Commons, the voters at election time, the local authorities. Which of these is to blame? The fault must be directly attributed to the executive government, but the blame lies fundamentally with their masters, the people, whose national predilection is for 'muddling through', and who believe that scientific study has little practical value. Theory and practice are in reality not opposed but complementary to one another, and the widespread belief to the contrary is responsible for much of the mental lethargy which makes our conduct of affairs what it is—too often a fortuitous muddle.

#### Coal Gas Research

AT the eighth Autumn Research Meeting of the Institution of Gas Engineers held in London on November 3-4, the papers showed current trends of thought in the gas industries. The thirty-ninth report of the Joint Research Committee of the Institution and the University of Leeds gave the first instalment of a study of the complete gasification of coal in oxygen-steam mixtures. Such a process, if successful, might make the industry less dependent on the choice of coal, and less would be required. At the same time it would have far-reaching consequences on the distributions of fuel. This report contained a study of the conditions within a fuel bed during gasification. Three papers dealt with the sulphur impurity in coal gas. Coal gas is the purest fuel in general use, but this very purity renders possible its use in flueless apparatus, and the small quantity of sulphur compounds present may become noticeable even if innocuous. The paper shows that the coal gas of the future may be purified of sulphur compounds to a degree hitherto unknown. The paper by H. Hollings on the formation and removal of gum in coal gas reveals the solution of a baffling problem which has arisen following the use of the practice of drying gas before distribution. Traces of unsaturated hydrocarbons—almost inconceivably minute—condense or polymerize to form gummy substances which may cause trouble in appliances. The solution of this puzzle is