

de Belgique, the Belgian authorities have achieved a further step towards cultural autonomy of the Flemish and French-speaking parts of the kingdom—following upon the creation of the Flemish University at Ghent soon after the Great War. For the present, each of the three classes of the new Flemish institution will consist of ten members appointed by royal decree. Further members will be co-opted, the total number being confined to twenty per class.

THE original members are: *Sciences*: J. De Smedt, A. Dumon, W. Robyns, G. Verriest (all of the University of Louvain); J. Gillis, J. Meuwissen, A. Schoep, H. L. Vanderlinden, A. J. J. Vandeveld (all of the University of Ghent); H. Schouteden (director of the Congo Museum); *Letters, etc.*: P. Bellefroid (University of Nymegen), E. De Bruyne, H. J. De Vleeschauwer (both of the University of Ghent), E. Van Dievoet (University of Louvain), H. de Man and R. Victor (both of the University of Brussels), J. Denucé, C. Huysmans, F. Prims and F. Van Cauwelaert (all of Antwerp); *Fine Arts*: P. Gilson, L. Mortelmans, J. Van Nuffel, composers; C. Permeke, A. Servaes, W. Vaes, painters; H. Vandeveld, architect; E. Wynants, sculptor; S. Leurs, University of Ghent; R. Maere, University of Louvain. Provisionally, Messrs. Van Cauwelaert and Schoep will act respectively as president and secretary of the Academy, the full title of which is "Koninklijke Vlaamsche Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schoone Kunsten van België".

#### Control of Nickel Distribution

IN a valuable paper on "The Control of War Metals as a Peace Measure", by F. E. Lathe and S. J. Cook, of the National Research Laboratories, Ottawa, the view is expressed that, although Canada produces more than 80 per cent of the world's output of nickel, control of distribution would not be a simple matter because only about 20 per cent of the annual production is used for war purposes, and the metal frequently passes through several hands before reaching the ultimate consumer. The calculations are based on 1934 figures, but the estimates are believed to be still substantially correct. The pamphlet has been forwarded to NATURE by way of comment on a suggestion made in the course of an article on "Science and a World Foundation" published in our issue of August 6, p. 227. Two further possibilities must be borne in mind. Reserves of the metal could be readily accumulated by the Government of a country which anticipated war; and, in the event of shortage, no effort would be spared to discover substitutes for essential metals. For an extended war, however, extremely large stocks would be required of such metals as iron and steel, copper, zinc and lead. The aim, therefore, should be to introduce restrictions of a temporary or unexpected character. But the only real hope of effective restriction lies in international action, and it would be most effective in the case of tin, antimony, nickel, copper and iron. This conclusion adds point to the proposal that scientific

workers of all nations should, as a group, combine with other groups to give what help they can in promoting the evolution of a World State, capable when necessary of exercising suitable control over the distribution of such commodities.

#### Smoke-like Swarms of the Harlequin Fly

REFERRING to the letter from Mr. A. S. E. Ackermann entitled "A Curious Atmospheric Phenomenon", in NATURE of September 10, several correspondents suggest that the curious grey columns described by him were due to swarms of *Chironomus*, the Harlequin fly. Swarms of these insects dance about in the air at evening time and are commonly called "gnats", to which they have considerable resemblance, though they differ from them in being entirely harmless. They often appear in columns on a calm evening and the columns may break up and re-form with a wavy motion. Capt. C. J. P. Cave writes: "I once saw a number of such columns on a very still evening in Lombardy. At first I took them to be very small narrow pillars of smoke from burning weeds, but a closer view showed them to be swarms of gnats. The whole description given by Mr. Ackermann tallies with my recollection of the phenomenon."

#### National Museum of Southern Rhodesia

DR. G. ARNOLD, director of the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo, writes to point out that some confusion would appear to have arisen in reference to the proposal to establish a museum for Zimbabwe, reported incorrectly to be intended as a 'National' museum (see NATURE, July 9, p. 65). The proposed museum, Dr. Arnold states, is to be a small one-roomed building, in which will be exhibited some of the original antiquities which have been found in that neighbourhood, and also plaster casts of finds which are now the property of the British Museum and of other museums in Southern Rhodesia and Cape Town. The National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, already in existence at Bulawayo, was formerly the Rhodesian Museum, which was founded in 1901 by the Rhodesia Scientific Association and the Rhodesia Chamber of Mines jointly. From 1902 the Government of Southern Rhodesia contributed to maintenance an annual grant equal in amount to the subscriptions guaranteed by the founding bodies and an annual contribution from the Bulawayo Municipality; but in 1936 the Government, acting on a recommendation made by the Museums Commission, of which Sir Henry Miers was chairman, took over the Museum under an Act of Parliament of Southern Rhodesia, and constituted it the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia. The control is vested in a Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor. It includes departments of zoology, entomology, geology, and ethnology, prehistory and national history. Under the provisions of the Act, the Board is also empowered, subject to the approval of the Governor, to acquire by agreement any existing museum in the Colony, and also, if directed by the Governor, to establish and maintain any new museum in the Colony. The number of visitors in the first year